

JOHN BOGARDUS

A NOVEL

GEORGE AGNEW
CHAMBERLAIN



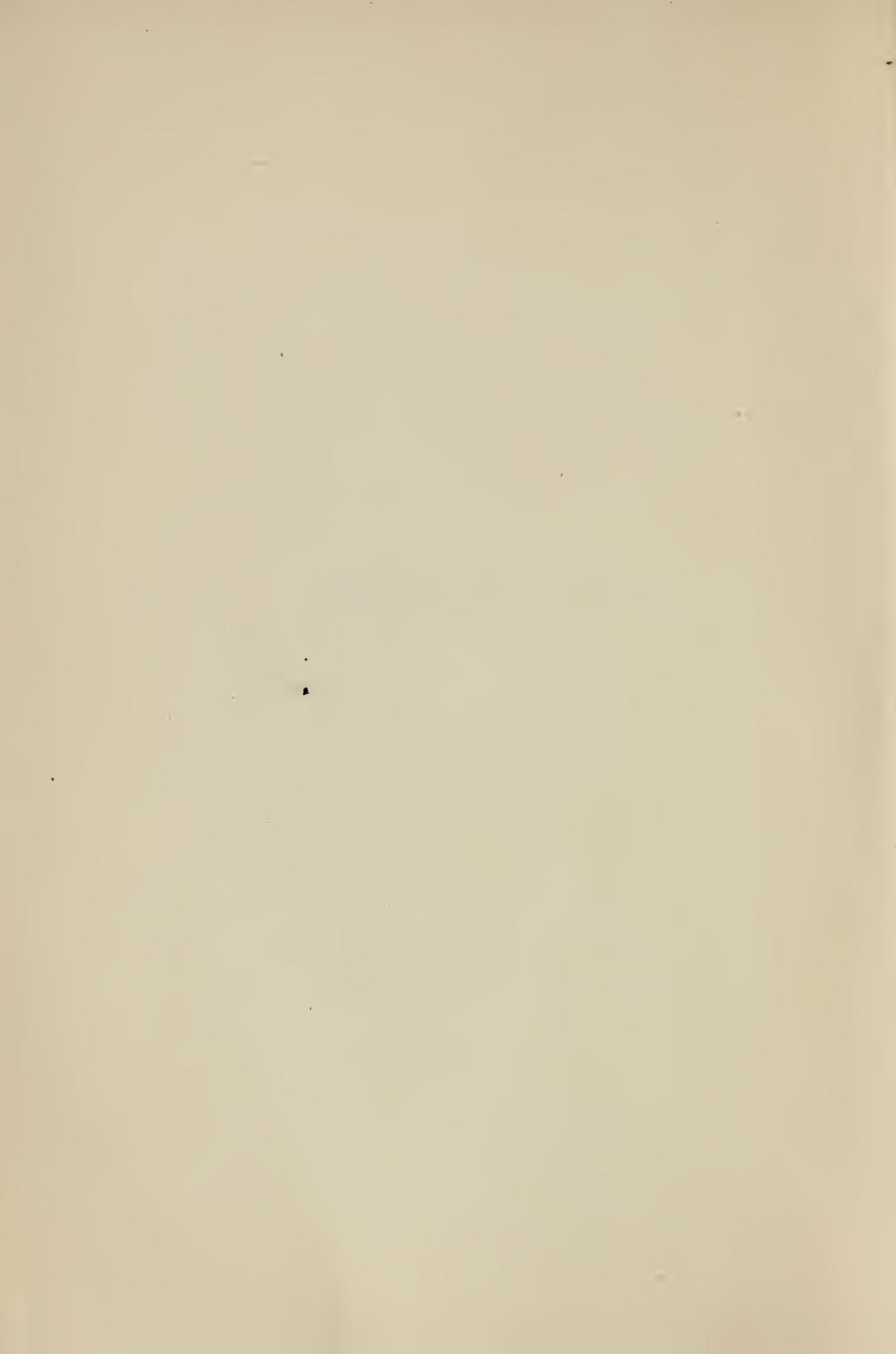
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BY

GEORGE AGNEW CHAMBERLAIN

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ILLUSTRATED BY W. T. BENDA



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JOHN BOGARDUS

BOOK I

Thus spake the God of Gifts,—and slept, and saw not:
“To each child its moment of illusion,
Its day of honey cupped in young petals,
Its measure of bliss against the hour of bitterness,
To each child,— childhood.”

JOHN BOGARDUS

CHAPTER I

IN the summer of 1902 James Bogardus, university professor of Romance languages, stood in a crowd on a New York pier and watched his son John, an inconsiderable individual in the flood of passengers, come down the gangway of an arriving liner.

American crowds are monotonously uniform, and this one was no exception save for the erect professor himself. He was distinguished by a mustache and pointed, iron-gray beard, a well-fitted frock coat, buttoned down the front, a tightly rolled umbrella, and, last and most remarkable, a glossy top hat.

Ever since Junior year at college had conferred on him the right to sport a high hat, James Bogardus had done so on every suitable occasion, guided no less by a sense of independence and dignity than by the instincts of all short men for anything that appears to add a cubit to their stature.

However, in spite of his garb, perhaps by reason of his manner of wearing it, no one could fail to mark him for an American of the Americans, nor to bestow in addition the flattering concession that he must be a distinguished American. Less could be said in this

regard for his son John, whose deliberate patience in waiting till everybody who was in a hurry had pushed down the gangway before him seemed to brand him either a foreigner or, at the best, a thoroughly denatured home product.

At this time John Bogardus was twenty years old and looked at least twenty-four in his somber, oddly cut, continental clothes. The straight-brimmed felt hat, high waistcoat, close-fitting jacket, and the trousers that were too wide just below the hips and too narrow just above the long pointed shoes, seemed to imprison his spirit as well as his body in a strait-jacket of propriety. Just as Bogardus the elder dominated his clothes, his son was dominated by his.

A keen-witted young lady on board had said that when she first saw him without a hat it had given her as much of a shock as catching any other man in his undershirt, and James Bogardus had an allied sensation when his son uncovered before him, disclosing a wavy crop of dark hair that looked what it was: the shining crown of youth. The professor gripped the boy's extended hand with both of his own and shook it so heartily that he dropped his umbrella. John was quick to pick it up for him.

"Now for the customs people," said the professor, in the despairing tones of every American face to face with the collectors of tribute at his country's gates. "I don't know why it is," he went on, "but I never pass my baggage except to the accompaniment of shivers in the spine. You know you've a right to everything you saw go into your trunks, but you always

have a feeling that somebody may have slipped in something while you weren't looking; a string of pearls so famous that nobody could sell it but the real owner, or — or a dead body."

John laughed. "Don't worry," he said. "You forget that I've been running a gauntlet of customs regularly for eight years in as many languages."

The professor stood back and watched with admiration the ease and calm assurance with which his leisurely son passed all barriers. They were in a cab and rolling away from the pier so quickly that John's last words still hung in his mind. Sitting very erect to save his glossy hat from a rub, his thin hands locked over the handle of his umbrella, he glanced questioningly at his boy's profile. "Eight years is a long time," he said, "but you've accomplished more than you could over here in seven times seven."

John scarcely heard his father. He was staring out of the open cab window on the dead ugliness of New York's west front. The city's East Side is unwashed, ragged, sordid, but it teems with life. It is gay in comparison with the decayed solitudes of the lower western side streets that seem to take painfully long strides toward the mighty artery of Broadway, pulsing with the life blood of the city.

John was inevitably depressed by this first view of the metropolis, so depressed that even the eventual plunge through the maelstrom of Broadway into the steadily flowing stream of Fifth Avenue did not quite revive his spirits, never ebullient at the best. He was silent and so was his father, sensitive to his boy's mood

and, though he would never have admitted it, somewhat abashed as well by the young man's grave poise.

This reunion meant much to James Bogardus. It made him feel not only happy but boyish in his happiness, and his silence, preposterous as it may seem, was very much akin to the sulks of an urchin repressed by the presence of an elder. A paradox is a paradox only to those too lazy to look for an explanation. There was really no mystery about John Bogardus nor were the present relations between him and his father at all illogical. Relations between personalities never are illogical under the surface; they depend ultimately on points of contact.

Between John Bogardus and his father the points of contact had been tampered with, arbitrarily thrown out of circuit during many years. It happened in this wise. James Bogardus had always looked upon himself as a makeshift for a professor of Romance languages. His university, which happened to be his *alma mater* as well, considered him the best available, and keenly aware of his own shortcomings he genuinely regretted that an institution so powerful and so linked almost from the inception of nationality with the intellectual progress of the country, should be forced to avail itself of makeshifts.

He wondered how many of his colleagues held their chairs by an equal sufferance and gradually there sprang up in him the ambition to prepare at least one exponent of Romance languages who would never have to depend on the subterfuges of a smattering of knowledge, but could face inquiring minds with a reservoir filled to

the brim from the live sources of the tongues that had heralded the birth of humanism and propagated the Renaissance.

This ambition served him as a unique solace when his wife, whom he had passionately adored, died and left their only child, then twelve years of age, to his sole care. Maternity has been studied again and again in all its phases but laic literature is peculiarly silent on the constituent elements of fathers in general. An overflow of mother's love drowns everything else including ambition, but ambition, at least for his male offspring, is commonly the measure of a father's affection, especially in those cases where he happens to have regarded his wife with the continuing adoration of a faithful lover.

James Bogardus would have been genuinely shocked had any one impugned the love he bore for his child by measuring it with the cold rule of ambition, but had his affection been even colored with the passion with which he had worshiped the boy's mother it is doubtful whether he could have taken him to Europe within a few months of his mother's death and left him there for eight years. To the professor, the mere fact that he had crossed four times during the eight years to spend his long holidays with his son would have seemed ample refutation of any suggestion of neglect.

John Bogardus as a student had more than fulfilled his father's most sanguine hopes. He had traveled ahead of his schedule. Two years in Italy, two in France, and one in Spain had given him a vernacular facility which had been welded into a co-related whole

in a course at Bonn, followed by a year divided between Provence, Portugal, and a certain amount of general though restricted travel. By the time he was twenty he had absorbed the Romance languages into his mental system as naturally as humanity absorbs milk, and just as naturally, and logically, he had grown away from his father.

On this long-awaited day of reunion, the two were far apart. A wall was between them. Neither father nor son actually sensed it, but both walked, unknowing, in its shadow.

The professor was restless and showed it by the time the cab drew up at the portals of the quiet but renowned hotel he patronized. "Here we are!" he cried, with an exploded sigh of relief, and busied himself with paying the cabman and giving orders as to the disposal of the luggage. As they passed up the lobby together his quick eyes noted the friendly but amused glances cast on him and his son. He was at no loss to read them. He had reason to know that his fellow countrymen are intolerant of the slightest idiosyncrasy of dress and that a Hindu who could walk the streets of any European capital unmolested and almost unremarked would probably be jeered out of stolid countenance if he attempted to saunter along Canal Street in his native garb, unless protected before and behind by the conventional boards of the sandwich-man.

Already uneasy, he found that the comfortless bedrooms and the much frequented lounges of the hotel presented an unfriendly atmosphere for the long talks

he had looked forward to having with his son. He decided to flee the city as quickly as possible and on the morning after John's arrival, having carefully packed away his own high hat and frock coat, he took his son to a large establishment and outfitted him completely with linen and ready-made clothes.

This morning held one moment that brought a kindling to John's eyes and a warm glow to his cheeks. He was standing arrayed in a new hat and the last suit purchased when his father said,

"Why not keep those on? They can send up your old things."

John felt a strange and disproportionate thrill.

"May I?" he said, flushing with sudden pleasure. The color in his cheeks made him look, for the first time since his arrival, as young as his years. It made him look so young that the professor felt a twinge of dismay, a twinge so slight that it passed practically unremarked.

John stepped out of the enormous building bravely as though by assuming the regulation garb of those about him he had suddenly become linked to the new life which only yesterday he had looked upon as a distant estate, hard of access.

But this feeling was not to last. James Bogardus was too intent on learning at first hand the measure of the glowing reports that had come to him in regard to his son's unusual accomplishments to apply the least penetration or attach the slightest importance to the signs, faint as they were, that might have led him to an understanding of the mental confusion that possessed

the boy, assailed by the inevitable yearnings of one who had too long dreamed of a final return to his native land.

Instead of taking John to the neighborhood of their old summer home, long since sold, where he could have picked up the threads of family friendships and had the chance to come back in spirit as well as in flesh, he carried him off to the crowded solitudes of a lake resort and purposely isolated him among strangers, thus thrusting into the years all hopes of a genuine reunion.

John was a handsome lad, taller than his father and darker. His hair was almost black, his eyes a rich brown, and his cheeks had a smooth, un-American tinge of olive as though the long years he had spent in the south of Europe had marked him skin deep. His frame was well set up but undeveloped by sports or any exercise save walking. His father chided him for not standing quite erect.

Father and son occupied two beds in the same room, adjoining a little veranda of which they had the sole use. Here they would sit for hours day after day and talk. Toward evening or sometimes in the cool of the early morning, they would go for long walks over the hills or through the woods that skirted the lake. As they walked they talked, and the talk always swung on the single pivot of Neo-Latin and its variations.

They discussed the Italic, Gallic, and Iberian tongues in all their relations, and the elder Bogardus impressed upon the younger that this flourishing branch alone of Average-Latin would be his care in a country given over to utilitarianism even among its intellectuals. At

the start James Bogardus was didactic, soon he spoke as to a confrère, but from the moment he drew his son into a dissertation on the Germanic taint running solely through the division his father had just specified, the elder man became a pupil and, scholastically at least, sat henceforth at the feet of the younger.

He gave a sigh of satisfaction as he realized how far beyond his dreams his son had gone, and more than once, his thoughts fixed on the assistant professorship that had long been promised for the day of fulfilment, he said to himself, "If only he were older! If only he were as old as he looked when he got off the ship!"

Little did he guess that in these moments of his own unvoiced aspirations, John's thoughts were equally fixed not on a distant chair in Romance languages but on chewing gum.

CHAPTER II

WHILE his tongue had been answering questions and propounding theories almost automatically, John's mind and his eyes had been busy with lesser things. The popular lake resort was overcrowded with youth. Boys in shirt-sleeves, in khaki, in flannels, even in bathing suits, swarmed out to manifold amusements. They swam, they canoed, they played tennis, went camping and chewed gum. So did the girls.

Brought up among youths who from the early day they put on long trousers feel naked without a waistcoat, this accepted variety and lack of clothing might have appealed to John as the emblem of his native freedom, the open recall to an inherited democracy. But it did not. It failed because it struck no chord of memory in a boy whose New England summer garb in distant days had been a shirt, open at the throat, a wide straw hat, and knee-length pants above sunburned bare legs.

But the rhythmic motion of young jaws — here was a thing he remembered. It swept across his heart-strings not for itself but for the memories it conjured. When his father sent him to buy a paper, his errand done, he glanced at the big glass jar full of packets of gum, started to speak, and then flushed and hurried

out only to march back a moment later. The color still in his cheeks, he said, a trifle louder than necessary, "I would like a package of chewing gum, please."

"What flavor?" asked the busy clerk.

For a second John paused, then memory spoke for him. "Wintergreen."

On the way back to the hotel and their veranda he opened the package and drew out a slip of gum. The feel of its covering of soft powder, of the smooth gum itself, its odor of wintergreen, were talisman and incense to recollection. He popped the gum into his mouth and chewed, his deep brown eyes fixed afar on memories of barefoot days, of a swimming hole, of apple, chestnut, and blackberry raids, of a raft on the overflow in a meadow, or of the view from the top of a smooth knoll, crowned with firs and carpeted with slippery pine-needles.

As he approached his father he took the gum, already almost tasteless, from his mouth, and rolling it into a wad pressed it under the lapel of his coat. All his later instincts rose up in arms against this outrage to the dignity of his new clothes, but they were powerless before the surge of memory reminding him that just so did the boy of other years guard a comparatively new wad of gum through the long school hours.

It is difficult for fathers to understand surreptitious rebellion in their children. Years later, the years that it almost always takes to bring regret, James Bogardus's spirit was to call back to the spirit of his son, "Why did n't you tell me that I was boring you to

tears, that you were longing to chew gum, to finish learning to swim, to crowd to the station at train time with a lot of chattering boys and girls, to dance at night and frivol away time in the day? I might not have understood why you wanted these things but I would have understood *you*. I would not have builded on sand a house for disillusion." And the boy's spirit was to reply, "Why in your turn did n't you blurt out to your father before you the hidden things that are never hidden to the eyes of love?"

Once, when his father had fallen into a doze after lunch, John stole softly from the veranda and went for a walk by himself. He chose the embowered paths by the lake side. At moments he walked rapidly, his head held high, his arms swinging free. At other moments he walked slowly, his head and his eyes fallen in dreams. For quite half an hour he sat upon a mossy log and then jumped up to throw stones at a squirrel, only to feel the next instant a throb of thanksgiving that he had n't hit the little chap.

On his way back he stood on a lonely, rocky point that ran out into the lake and watched a catboat swoop down upon him. His blood surged with the surge at its foaming bow. On it came, courting disaster, laughing at it. Suddenly it jibed, the broad sail slatted, went over with a slap and a creaking of stays, filled and drew away.

John gasped as he saw the boat's sole occupant, a bare-armed, bare-headed girl, sitting alone at the helm, her loose hair blown before the wind. She caught the look in his eyes, smiled, and more out of mischief than

impudence waved her hand at him as she headed her little craft into the safe distance.

John stood for long and stared. To what far nook of the wide lake was she bound? What lamplit room would hold her to-night? On what paths would she wander to-morrow? The yearning of youth for youth swelled in his bosom. He dreamed dreams. He saw himself coming upon her in some shaded wood, speaking to her, touching her hand. Then, with the fantastic leaps of boyhood's imagination, he saw himself saving her from disaster, from fire, a runaway, or shipwreck.

It was at this moment that his father found him. "Where have you been, my boy? I've been looking for you for an hour."

"Oh, just for a walk," said John, as he turned to leave his point of rock and his dreams.

A puzzled look came into his father's face. "But why did n't you wake me? You know I'm always ready for a walk with you."

"I did n't want to wake you. I thought the sleep was doing you good," said John, coloring slightly at the lie.

"Oh, I get enough sleep," said his father easily. "Never worry about that. There are such loads of things to talk about that I sometimes think we sleep altogether too much at night, let alone day naps. We've talked over the past pretty thoroughly. We know where we stand to-day. Now, the thing to do is to settle the future."

"Yes, sir," said John.

“Our holidays are drawing to a close,” continued the elder Bogardus, “and before we go into what you’re going to do I want to sum up what you’ve done. You’ve learned more, much more, than I sent you to learn. You’ve laid your foundations deep and well. We need n’t think any more about that. But you lack two things: years and a degree.”

“Yes, sir,” said John.

“The degree will be easy for you,” continued his father, “but we’ll have to wait for the years. Some men never move. They stay in one place mentally and otherwise, grow old slowly, and stay old a long time. Other men grow old quickly and stay young forever. They are the travelers. I want you to be a traveler. Now, no man has ever moved his body around the world without moving his mind at the same time. To-night I’m going to tell you what I propose and then you can tell me what you think of it.”

“All right, sir,” said John.

They had come upon the hotel and John paused to watch the crowd of bathers. They dived from the wharf, from boats, and from the float. Some swam with long swirling strokes that shot them through the water, others breasted the lake ripples heavily like blunt-nosed ferry boats, still others skirted the shore as though they felt safer where an extended toe would touch bottom; but, by hook or by crook, all swam.

“If you can’t even swim what an ass you are to dream of saving a girl from drowning.” It was as though a voice had spoken to John. With a quickened step he walked after his father.

"Father," he said, "I think I'd like to bathe."

"Would you?" said the professor. "Well, why not?"

John hesitated. "I'd have to get a bathing-suit," he said, smiling and coloring at the same time.

"Bless my soul," exclaimed the professor, thrusting his hand into his trousers' pocket, "you've got no money! There," he said, pressing a ten-dollar bill into his son's hand, "that's yours. There you are. Run along."

As John hurried up the single business street of the village his father stood and stared after him, vainly trying to pin down a fleeting impression that just now he had spoken to his boy as if he were a boy for the first time since he had welcomed him back.

Half an hour later, feeling very naked in a close-fitting bathing-suit, John walked out on the wharf, paused for a moment, clenched his teeth, and plunged into deep water. In the far-off days of the swimming hole he had but barely reached the dog-paddling stage of natation. That modicum of knowledge had fortunately not forsaken him, so that when he arose spluttering from the depths of the lake he could at least keep afloat by whirling his arms and legs around like the wings of a windmill gone mad. He produced a great commotion in the water but the distance between himself and firm land remained alarmingly constant.

However, he would not let himself doubt or cry out and despite the fact that he had swallowed more of the lake than was good for him he turned with some spirit on the strong swimmer who seized him by the hair and

with three powerful strokes towed him to shallow water.

"I suppose you meant well," said John as soon as he could speak, "but I wish you had let me alone."

"Well, of all the cheek!" said the tall stranger. "D' you know you was *goin' down* when I grabbed you?"

"I know that," said John, calmly, "but I could have crawled in along the bottom."

The stranger laughed so heartily, his blue eyes crinkled up so merrily at the corners, that John could not help but laugh with him.

"Look here, son," said the tall man. "I'd like to learn you to swim. Come out with me in a boat tomorrow morning at ten. One lesson will do it if nerve counts as much as it used to and I guess it does. Will ye come?"

John nodded a quick assent. He said nothing but his eyes spoke for him. That night he could hardly tear his thoughts from the morrow to meet with courtesy, let alone enthusiasm, the generous proposal of his father.

"What I suggest is this," said James Bogardus. "There are three thousand dollars left of the fund I had determined to spend on your education. I propose to take out a letter of credit in your name for that amount and to turn you loose without conditions except, of course, that you are to pick up a European degree while you're away."

"Of course," said John.

"It does n't much matter where you take the degree," continued his father. "Bonn, Heidelberg, Leipzig —

they all look equally well in a faculty register, and that's all you want the degree for. Make the money last as long as you can and whether you come back soon or late, come back as old as possible so that you won't look like a child preaching in the temple and be accused of presumption by the prophets and the blind."

James Bogardus paused for a moment and then, vaguely disappointed, added, "Well, what do you say?"

John brought himself to rise to the occasion with a wrench. "I say that you are splendidly generous and thoughtful," he answered. "I'll — I'll try not to disappoint you."

"And I can assure you," said his father, "you won't have to try very hard, not after what you've done already."

Sharp at ten o'clock the next morning John was at the water side in his bathing-suit, having merely told his father that he was going for a swim. Within five minutes the tall stranger appeared with a boat and picked him up. In silence and with the short choppy stroke of a professional seaman he drove the boat out into the lake and only at half a mile from shore rested on his oars.

"Well, son," he said, "what's your name?"

John told him.

"An' I'm Cap'n Ike Carr," said the stranger. "Master of the schooner *Alexandrine* that's havin' her bottom scraped in between charters. Now as to swimmin'. The greatest mistake you can make in learnin' to swim is to make up your mind to try hard. Swim-

min' is the gol-durnedest easiest form of loafin' ever discovered by man."

"Is it?" said John, doubtfully.

"What happened to you when you jumped into deep water?" continued the captain. "Your muscles turned into pianner wires, did n't they? All strainin' like Billy-o an' gettin' nowheres."

John nodded. "That's the way it was," he said with a laugh.

"Well, that's all wrong," said Captain Ike. "Swimmin' 's like lying on a feather bed only softer. All you gotta do is jest to lie all sprawled out and remember this: if there ain't a tight muscle in your body you can't sink if you try. Now I'm going over the side and don't you jump after me. Just let yourself into the water easy like and keep one hand on the gun'ale."

Captain Ike shipped the oars and stood up. He was not a young man, his temples were shot with gray, but he still possessed the high tide of vigor that makes a big man's lanky body a thing of joy to himself and to others. John watched with envy the clean, long dive from the stern of the boat and its exaggerated lolling as, without making a single stroke, the bather shot to the surface and lay there like a log for as long as he could hold his breath. Then with a slow flap of an arm and the crooking of a leg the body went into languid motion and gradually circled the boat.

"Come on," said the captain.

John let himself slowly into the water, keeping firm hold on the gunwale.

“Draw yourself up a bit,” said the captain. “Now let yourself down till only your nose is showin’. Feel the water take the weight?” he asked, as John came up.

“Yes,” said John.

“Holdin’ onto the gun’ale is bad for you,” continued the captain. “It keeps that arm pianner-wire. Jest let yerself flop on your back and mind you don’t tighten *nothin’*.”

John did as he was bidden. He felt the captain’s hand placed lightly under his head. He lay quite relaxed and let his arms float out from his sides.

Captain Ike drew one of the oars over the side into the water and slipped it under John’s head. Then he withdrew his hand and paddled noiselessly away. He swam around the boat and as he came across the bows shouted, “Well, son, been asleep?”

John started and turned his head. The oar slipped from under it. For a moment panic threatened him, then he fastened his mind on the lolling movements of the captain rising from his dive. He pretended he was the captain. He lay still and flopped his hands lazily. The water did not drag him down; it buoyed him up.

Captain Ike was as good as his word. By the end of an hour John had not learned to swim, but he had acquired what comes to the same thing in the end, the belief that water could n’t drown him.

CHAPTER III

TWO weeks later John stood on the deck of a steamer bound for Hamburg and watched clouds and distance play tricks with New York's sky line. His mind was still in strange confusion. How was it that after two short months in his native land he turned his back on it almost without regret and faced a return to Europe almost, if not quite, cheerfully? Were his dreams of years so easy of fulfilment that it took but a few days to quench their long desire? Had it been quenched or had it died of thirst?

For all his acquired wisdom he was still too young to see himself clearly, try as he might. Anybody's mother could have told him, "Why, you poor boy, you have n't been home at all! You and your dad have been traveling in your foreign countries all the time and you've been seeing America through a car window and a telescope a century long."

It was true. Until he has revisited the concrete scenes of his youth, until he has felt the shock of finding the mansion in which he was born shrunk to the proportions of a very modest village house and the precipice in the barn, rafter to manger, down which he tumbled and miraculously lived to tell the tale, reduced to the size of a safe jump for a hen with a

broken leg; until, the cold dew of dawn tickling his ankles, he has picked a crisp early apple and bitten into it or watched a straw-hatted urchin at the old pool under the willow catch a sucker with a worm, a bent pin, and a piece cut out of his father's best trawl-line; until his eyes have dimmed before these sights and his heart swelled before a thousand lesser memories, no man has returned to his native land.

John looked back on his two months and saw a ruck of distant high lights that had kept their distance, all but the kindly man who had clutched him and pulled him by the hair into the reach of friendship. Of all the boys and girls, women and men, that had scintillated across his vision like pastels in a frieze, Captain Ike alone stood out, alive, warm, clothed in flesh and blood.

From such meager fare the boy returned to Europe only to find that it too had lost its savor. He decided to take his degree with as little trouble to himself as possible and consequently passed by his old university to Leipzig where his thesis on Romanic and the Renaissance, into which he managed to introduce a challenge of three of the derivations of the supreme authority, Diez, that pillar of Bonn, was accepted not only with praise but with glee.

This matter off his mind, he wrote to his father from a sense of filial duty and to Captain Ike on impulse. Then, unable to decide what he would do next, he loafed about the old university town and wondered why the whole world seemed empty to his freedom. A postal card from the captain suddenly changed his point of

view. It was short but potent as magic: "If you have got nothing better to do meet me at Plymouth end of April."

The end of April was still a month away but John crossed at once from Calais to Dover with the idea of killing time by walking the length of the south coast. The highways and byways of the southern counties were already held and holding all that came their way in the thrall of spring. He wandered lazily and was content. He smiled back at the primroses gleaming from a background of mud, and once, carried away, he waved his arm full length in answer to the greeting of the budding gorse on a warm, protected hillside. The blood in his veins throbbed in unison with the rising sap of a world in resurrection. When birds sang he whistled a reply; he even mooed at lowing cows, and stopped five minutes to rub the nose of a friendly pony that had thrust his head over a hedge and whinnied "Hello!"

One warm afternoon, still in the mood of the friendly pony, the cows, the singing birds, and the joy of reviving things, he reached the town of Lewes and wandered for an hour through its still streets, bounded by close-cropped hedgerows and quaint neat houses, dreaming over their long, long past and breathing a spirit of peace.

He had all but left the town behind when he came upon a little place that caught the eye by its air of incipient neglect. Its hedge and tiny lawn needed barbering badly, there was a smudge of rot in the thick thatched roof, a fallen rose-vine lifted up appealing

shoots from the ground and cried aloud for a helping hand. As John reached the wide arch in the hedge over the front path, a scene, vivid as a scene in a play, met his vision and arrested his steps.

The thatched roof of the cottage was prolonged into a deep gable over the wide front door, forming a little porch with two short benches on the sides. On one of these benches sat a big-boned woman with a pair of crutches. Her face was flabby and her clothes hung loosely upon her, as though skin and clothes had been made to fit a plump, broad, comfortable person that had shrunk away from them. John could see tears rolling slowly down her cheeks, following deep, new-made furrows of pain.

On the other bench sat a child, eight or nine years old, a girl, clutching at her breast with tightly clenched little fists and gazing steadfastly, angrily, at a man who, with his back to John, crouched toward her. The little girl's dark hair was short, chopped off just above her shoulders, and without being curly was full of rebellious twists and waves. Rebellion was in her black eyes, in her flushed cheeks, in her tiny firm chin.

"Will ye give it me, ye little spitfire?" snarled the man.

"No, Papà," said the child, in a voice choked not with tears but with rage.

"Papà! Hear her! Papà!" mimicked the man drunkenly.

"No, Papà, no," repeated the child.

"You haven't a papà," jeered the man. "Hear me? You're a stray, a changeling, you are. Eatin'

charity food an' hoardin' up your gold." He reached forward and clutched at her hands.

"No, Papà, no!" cried the child.

The man caught her little clenched fists, forced them open, and seized the golden sovereign they had been guarding. It was attached to a thin chain that passed around her neck. With a jerk he broke the chain and doubling his fist tightly over the coin, turned with a curse to stumble down the steps to the street. John drew back and let him pass. He watched him stagger down the road, tearing with his teeth at the ring welded to the sovereign's edge.

From the stoop came the little voice, choked now with unshed tears as well as with rage. "N-n-no, Papà, n-n-no!" gasped the child, her hands still clutched and quivering against her breast, her eyes staring straight before her from a little face suddenly gone white. Through all the scene the woman had sat absolutely still, the tears coursing faster and faster down her cheeks.

John's heart pounded in his chest. He started in through the arch, paused, and then walked rapidly the few steps to the porch. It was in his mind to tell the little girl not to cry, but when he had drawn near he was amazed to see that she was not crying, that her eyes were quite dry. Only in her voice there were tears as, paying no attention to him, she repeated again, "N-n-no, n-n-no, *no!*"

"Oh, darling," gasped the woman, "please, don't. Oh, please, don't."

With one foot on the low step of the porch John

leaned forward and held out a gold coin to the little girl. She gave it one quick glance and with a curl of her lip clenched her little fists the tighter against her breast. All sovereigns are not alike to the heart of a child.

"Young sir," said the woman, "don't think she's hard and thankless and unladylike. It's not a sovereign that'll heal the wound in her breast."

John picked the little girl up in his arms. She struggled to be put down, not violently, but as though she were very old and it bored her to be handled. He only held her the closer and sitting down on the bench took her on his knees, smoothed out her little smock, and suddenly asked her if she had ever been bitten by a dog.

Her thoughts were on the wing but that quick shot brought them down. "No," she said and, after a pause, "Have you?"

"Yes," said John, and stopped.

"What did you do?" asked the child.

"I bit him back," said John gravely.

"And what did he do then?" asked the little girl.

"He was surprised," said John.

On that remark the two of them pondered solemnly for a long time. It was the woman that broke the silence as she saw the child relax her tense body and sink softly against John's shoulder. "Oh, sir," she said, "you *do* know 'em, the little ones."

John smiled and flushed with pleasure as he glanced down at the child in his arms. "I?" he said, and laughed. Then he looked frankly at the woman.

"This is the first time in all my life that I've held a kiddie in my lap. Won't you tell me about her?"

The woman had stopped crying but she still was very still, and her stillness was flat like the stillness of a sack of meal. "It was n't always like this," she said, with a movement around of her eyes that was like a gesture. "Our little place was the neatest of all once and the dearest. Clean it was and healthy for flowers, a happy place for a child. So Jim and me, we answered a notice in the paper."

She paused, her wandering eyes coming to anchor on the child that drowsed against John's shoulder. "That was three year ago. A lady brought her. She was a little mite then, five, six year old an' small for her age, but she seemed like she was ten in her ways and now that she is eight she seems more like twelve; so wise, so quiet, and never any trouble. The lady said she'd send us two pounds a week for her keep and that the girlie was to have always the best.

"For a long time she sent two pounds a week, then she wrote a letter and said she could only send one pound a week and the little girl must have second best for a while. Then, 'most a year ago, she never sent any more nor wrote, and we could n't write to her because we did n't know where. At first she had always sent from London but afterwards when it was only one pound she sent mostly from province towns, big towns and then smaller ones, always different.

"It would never have mattered to Jim and me, her not sending, if I had kept my old self. Strong, I was,

and broad; a woman to work and to eat, too. My man, Jim, he was strong, too, and steady, an' we both loved Mother."

"Mother?" said John, questioningly.

"Yes, the child," said the woman. "Janice is her name, but Jim — he was playful once — an' he called her Mother because she was so old in her ways. So we always called her Mother. Then it happened, my fall, an' I lost the use of my two legs. For a while Jim kept up his cheer an' could n't praise the child enough for the way she'd try to help, crying like she did once because she could n't carry me in one day when it rained."

The woman paused for a moment and tears, unheeded as before, started crawling down her cheeks. "Then came the drink." Her wet eyes fastened on John's intent face. "Young sir, my man was a good man once, but now, ever since the doctor said as I was this way for always — Days and days he's been bullyin' the child like you seen him. I remember when her lady mother put the sovereign and the chain around her neck, laughin' an' tellin' her that so long as ever she kept it she'd never be poor! For days an' days he's been callin' her hard, hard names like you heard him, an' some day he'll — he'll strike her, an' then my heart will break. Oh, he's not my man now, he's no more my Jim."

The little girl, exhausted by the climax of that long, losing struggle, had fallen asleep. John held her close, very close, his eyes full of dreams. He began talking to the woman, craftily at first and then boldly, as

though he played for a stake he could better afford to lose than to win.

"You can tell him," finished John, "that the lady came while he was away drinking and that all she could give you was ten pounds."

"No," said the woman. "I'll not take ten pounds from you and you with the child to do for. Two pounds will keep Jim drunk for a fortnight and what more need have I once little Mother is gone?"

They woke the child and the woman talked to her. The little girl turned grave eyes on John. "And you will be my new papà?" she asked.

"No, Mother," said John, smiling down at her. "I'll be just your boy — the biggest doll a little mother ever had."

Her face broke slowly to a smile, a strange smile that seemed, almost consciously, to humor these grown-ups and their playful folly.

CHAPTER IV

JOHN was not nervous by nature, but he was very nervous indeed at the moment of entering the train for Brighton. On his back was his own knapsack, in one hand he carried the little girl's absurdly little bundle, and in the other he held her soft, clinging hand. It seemed to him that the veriest passer-by could not let that cortège escape without a question.

His fears soon died. During the short run to Brighton no one entered their second-class compartment and once the child and he were equally among strangers he began to feel easier. People seldom noticed them without smiling and some even made love to Janice, but no one ever asked him whence they came or whither they were bound, and all seemed to take it for granted that he was her brother and her guardian to some near destination. Even at Plymouth where he took modest rooms in a house overlooking the harbor entrance no one seemed to find the pair a puzzle or, if they did, tried to solve it.

During the six days that passed before the *Alexandrine*, flying the Stars and Stripes, was towed in to her anchorage, John had no pleasures and no moments that Janice did not share. His own acquired age now served him well. Women were not the mystery to him that they are, almost invariably, to carefully bred

American youths of his years. He held the European point of view; that women differ from the rest of human beings only in that they are two shades more human. Consequently, the little exigencies that might have stumped any one of a million American males far more advanced in years than he, found him unembarrassed and competent.

On passing for the first time from her own tiny room to John's larger apartment and noting the big double bed, Janice instantly demanded, with one of those precocious flashes of jealousy so astonishing in children, "Why does My Boy have two pillows?"

And, after an infinitesimal pause, John had answered, "I always have two when I can; one for the Brownies. They come and talk to me while I'm asleep and when I wake up I think I have been dreaming."

The last hard year at Lewes had taught Janice that she could n't have everything for the asking, so she at once set to work to collect the makings of an extra pillow. Her sudden passion for shavings and old rags puzzled John for a day or two, but when she asked him if he thought she might have a needle for her very own, his eyes were opened. Some men are generous with money because they are too lazy to be generous with time and trouble, but John was generous with himself. He became Janice's assistant and errand boy, acting at the same time for the board of health, and it took them three days to make the pillow.

When John went down to meet the captain, Janice, in a clean little smock, went with him. They were the first thing the captain's eyes fell on as he climbed

ashore. "Hello, son," cried Captain Ike; "picked up a lady friend, have ye?"

Greetings over, the captain suggested that Janice be "stowed with her ma," so that they two could hustle around and tend to business.

"She has n't any ma," said John; "she's mine at present."

"Yourn?" cried the captain, aghast. Then the color mounted in his naturally florid cheeks. "When I saw you, son, I thought you was going to go a voyage with me."

John's heart sank. "So we are," he said, over a lump in his throat.

Captain Ike heard that lump and it kept him from disillusioning the boy on the spot. He agreed to have dinner with John and Janice and they separated for the longest day in John's life.

After quite a merry dinner whose gaiety was in no little part due to the extraordinary poise of the young hostess of eight, the party adjourned to John's rooms for a conference.

"Captain Ike," said John, his heart in his voice, "let me tell you how it was."

He described his walk from Dover, told him about the feel of things, the primroses and the friendly pony, and gave him a picture of the dreaming suburbs of the town of Lewes. Then he sprang upon the captain the scene through the arch in the neglected hedge as it had been sprung upon himself. Through the rest of the tale Janice sat very straight on the edge of her chair, her legs hanging motionless, well up from the

floor. Her face grew quite white and her chin trembled.

Before John had finished the captain had begun blowing his nose, shuffling his feet, and blinking his eyes. "Son," he asked, "was that bucko-brute bigger 'n what you are?"

"No," said John, "and he was drunk. It would have been easy and done me good to thrash him, but would it have done anybody else any good?"

The captain nodded his head slowly as he pondered. "Ever seen a bill of health," he asked at last, "and what it wants to know about 'persons on board,' where they come from, what you done with the cat you had last port of call, an' how did the deckhand get that bump behind the ear?"

"No," said John, smiling, "but why should n't Mother and I be just passengers?"

"I 'm not saying," said the captain, "that the *Alexandrine* has never carried a passenger license, but it's a long day from now to then when our clippers were lookin' for a reckerd every time they put to sea. No, you an' Mother, if you go at all, 'll have to show on ship's papers under the headin', 'Master's family.'"

"Hurray!" cried John, and grabbing Janice's hands danced around the room with her. She cast her slow smile over her shoulder at the captain as though they two knew what it was to have to humor the young.

"Where are we bound for?" asked John.

"South Africa," said the captain. "It's a long voyage. What about her things?"

Janice fetched all her wardrobe and laid it out piece

by tiny piece on John's bed. "H'm," said Captain Ike, "with the bo's'n washin' the day things while she's asleep and the nighties in the mornin', they might last two-three weeks, then they'd be wore out. Son, you'n me'll have to do some shoppin' to-morrer mornin'."

Never did two full-grown males face a herculean task with more courage and singleness of heart than did these two. The debate as to whether they should take samples or Janice herself as an ocular exhibit of what they needed was settled promptly by the lady in the case. She went; and before they had been five minutes in the shop she and the young woman behind the counter had pushed the captain and his crew of one off the bridge into the scuppers. The captain was reduced to the sole function of saying, "Six," every time Janice said, "I'll have one of these, if I may, thank you."

John's life was to be one of rapid mutations, but through all its vicissitudes he was to remember that voyage, Plymouth to Durban, as a happy time, a time not so much of growth as of well-being, long days when time itself was not, banished from mind by an all-pervading content. A single cloud, pointed out by Captain Ike, hovered on his far horizon. "It's all very fine, but what are you going to do with her?"

Before they had been out a week little Janice had become Mother to the whole ship's company, 'fore and abaft the mast, and to the ship's cat. She was not into everything like a mischievous monkey, far from it; but she moved through every domain with an in-

congruous dignity that made her no less beloved and brought horny-handed men with humbly offered tribute to her feet.

Nothing surprised her, not even the full-rigged ship in a bottle that it took the bo's'n four weeks to make, but she showed such a calm and steadfast pride in all her possessions that each succeeding day was an acknowledgment added to her initial, "Thank you so much."

It was no wind-jammer crew that manned the *Alexandrine*. Not to have sailed in her five voyages made of a man a newcomer, subject to frequent snubs on all matters pertaining to the personality not only of that particular ship but of all the fast-diminishing clipper fleet that sailed under the Old Man's name. There were men aboard who had bred sons and launched them into the world on earnings from the *Alexandrine*, and other men, youngsters, whose fathers had handled her sweat-polished wheel before them. Such a breed could understand steadfastness.

As John watched the child winning hearts and holding them, he began to know how firmly his own was coming to be held in the keeping of her two little hands and to doubt the wisdom with which he had foreseen and solved, even as far back as on the stoop of the little house in Lewes, the problem that Captain Ike now pressed to his attention.

What John had thought back there in Lewes was that if a young man bound for the whole wide world was worth his salt he could soon find a better and a safer home for so winsome and unusual a child as

Janice. Could James Bogardus have witnessed his son's naïve assumption of this monster responsibility he would have revised his opinion that John was old for his years and in doing so, he would only have set his face toward further and repeated revisions. He was at once too near and too far from his son to see that the boy was as unequal in development as had been his training. He was old in knowledge, young as morning in the things of the heart.

Durban was just beginning to draw a long breath of prosperity. The effects of the depression and financial cyclone that had fallen upon the port immediately following the Boer War were already fading in the light of a new dawn, and people were just realizing that most of those who had succeeded in staving off foundering could at last consider that they had definitely weathered the storm. Here and there one still came upon worried eyes and drawn faces, but for the most part the inhabitants seemed to share the light-heartedness of the ever-increasing troops of up-county holiday-makers whose money flowed in just in time to save the port from economic decomposition.

Peace fled the decks of the *Alexandrine* from the moment she dropped anchor and John soon formed the habit of leaving her in the early morning, taking Janice with him, of course, to return only at the beckoning of the ship's riding lights. Together the two wandered about the town, seeking mild adventures among its shops, its Indian quarter, on the beach, already showing signs of becoming the Coney Island of South Africa, and on the hills of the Berea, dotted with the

well-kept villas of the local aristocracy — an aristocracy none the less solid for resting its foundations on pickled herring and the yard-stick.

In the memory-gallery of more than one Durbanite still hangs the picture of a handsome youth in rough tweeds, sometimes leading by the hand and sometimes carrying on his shoulder a black-eyed little girl that might well have been his sister. The two were by no means to be confused with the waning throngs of holiday makers. Against the background of ordinary trippers they stood out peculiarly distinct, reminiscent of the days when Durban was not a resort but a port, the doubtful haven of ships, waifs, and strays.

It was the indigenous whose eyes were caught by the young couple and who frequently spoke to them with the freedom that flourishes in new countries and marks the clan of the pioneer. The men were drawn by Janice's quaint person, and most of the women said it was Janice's quaint person that drew them even while their too-friendly eyes passed over John approvingly.

South African femininity is a peculiar composition whose major division is made up of equal parts of languor, sun, smiles, and flame, and finds its many recruits among the women who do not struggle, the women who are too soft and warm for the enduring clasp of tradition, who live by the senses alone and bask content in the moral Nirvana of hot countries. But there is the minority, who hold steadfastly to antecedent faiths, whose inner life has withstood or transcended the test of their surroundings, and who without becoming hard have grown firm and yet continued lovable.

It was fated that John should meet on the same day a representative of each of these divisions of woman-kind. The first was a tall dark woman with sleepy eyes, languid until she was awakened, and then suddenly alive and vibrant. She had seen John and Janice before. On the first occasion she had paused and looked over her shoulder, on the second she walked straight up to them and said in a low and pleasant voice, "Oh, you little darling!" Then, turning definitely to John, "What is her name?"

In five minutes, without appearing in the least abrupt, she had invited and carried them away to lunch. The husband not appearing, they three found themselves alone in a well-appointed house that reflected its mistress in its lazy lounges, soft cushions, and in its tropical light subdued by carefully chosen shades, as well as in its excellent French mirrors.

That Janice was to the lady merely a point of purchase from which she intended to spring into John's good graces soon became a self-evident fact which she tried neither to gloss over nor to emphasize. With a good-natured sweep of her eyes she occasionally brought her little guest into the picture but never into the talk, which after the first few moments she addressed to John and to John alone.

After lunch she took them into an informal living-room, placed Janice before a table and a picture-book, and led John on from books to bibelots and scattered photographs. When they walked she brushed against him lightly and when they stood she came so near that he could see the fast pulse in her throat, hear her dress

move over the rise and fall of her bosom, and feel in his own veins the reflected glow of the fire in hers.

“Would n’t the little girl like to go out to play?” she asked casually.

The words brought John back to himself. He glanced instinctively at Janice and saw that her quick ears had heard. Her little body stiffened, her face went white, and she gave the lady such a steady, seeing look as only one woman can give another. So, at least, it seemed to John, who in an instant was carried back to their beginning of things and expected Janice’s lips to open to her first passionate cry of, “No, Papà, no!” — the cry that had gone straight to his heart and stayed there ever since.

“Not unless I go too,” he said calmly, turning from the lady with the quiet assurance of experience.

He left her puzzled and, striding across the room, picked Janice up in his arms. She did not struggle to be put down, for she had learned long since that this was My Boy’s sole gesture of protection and love.

CHAPTER V

JOHN refused the offer of the lady, who had turned languid again, to have the trap set them down anywhere they liked, and he and Janice started off for a ramble along the crest of the long, low mountain. As they were coming back, headed for the Point and the *Alexandrine*, Janice ran a few paces ahead in pursuit of a swirl of yellow butterflies. Out of a break in the high hedge suddenly shot a carriage and pair and a frightened Coolie coachman. John hurled himself forward, clutched Janice by the skirt, and snatched her back into the muddy ditch by the roadside.

At the same time the Coolie coachman dragged the horses back on their haunches. The carriage, in which a lady was rising to her feet, came to a stop. "How often have I told you to be careful?" she said to the coachman, tensely. "How often!"

"He was n't really driving fast," said John. "It just happened."

Janice, always particularly neat in her person, was looking down at her mud-stained smock with dismay. Suddenly shame came over her, she blushed, and coming close to John, hid her face against his rough coat. He was surprised, for he had never seen her shy before.

But Janice was not shy. Only one woman in a thousand could have read that gesture aright and the

lady in the carriage happened to be one in a thousand. As she stepped down she said to the coachman, "Don't wait for me. Go and fetch your master."

Then she turned to Janice and said in a soft, friendly voice, "Now, my dear, you can't possibly go home like that, can you? Come on up to the house and let's see what we can do."

Holding the lady's hand with one of her own and John's with the other, Janice walked up the drive with eyes fixed ahead lest they fall again on that very ugly blot. She seemed almost glad to leave John alone on the veranda and he had time to reflect that this lady had not talked at him through Janice, had not, in fact, talked at or to him at all. He liked her.

The house was very peaceful, the light in the rooms opening on the veranda was subdued not by secretive shades but by clambering vines and shadowing trees, and there were dim recesses that waited for the pupil of the eye to dilate to the tone of their friendly shadows before they fully disclosed their charms.

When Janice came back to John, who had strolled into a large living-room, she was on fire with excitement. Her short hair, freshly combed and brushed, looked as if it would break into long waves and undulations if only it could reach far enough, her cheeks were aglow, and her face and her hands exhaled a faint fragrance of soap. But above and beyond all these things she was dressed in a charming little white frock.

So well did the pretty dress fit and become her that John gave way to the feeling of wonder of one brought

face to face with magic. His glance passed to the lady standing in the doorway, one hand resting on the door-jamb and trembling, her lower lip, trembling a little too, and her eyes, wide open and moist, looking at Janice but staring far beyond, and he understood better than any other tongues could have told him that a memory dressed in a little white frock was playing in the room.

In the wide front doorway appeared a big bob-tailed sheep-dog, gray and white, pink tip of tongue hanging pendent to a jet-black nose, kind eyes blinking under forbidding brows, stocky legs absurdly woolly. He was friendly, like the house.

"Oh!" breathed Janice, standing very still and staring. "Please, what is his name?"

"Just Woolly," said the lady, and caught her breath.

The dog gave vent to a single high note, startling because unlike the bark of other dogs, it stood alone. "He's calling you," said the lady.

"Really?" said Janice. She ran forward, laid her hand tentatively on the dog's silky head, and the next moment had her arms around his neck. He led her away down the veranda. "Oh! Just Woolly," they heard her say; "how *very* woolly you are!"

Almost unconsciously the lady motioned John to a chair and sat down herself. She did not try to talk, but clasped her hands tightly in her lap and fixed her eyes on them. John could see that she was striving hard to get herself back to the point where she could chatter of little things. The instinct that had let him

see what he had seen led him to save her from talking now. He began of himself to tell her about Janice, how he had found her and taken her, the quaint things she had said, the wonders of housewifery she had performed on board the boat.

Soon the lady turned her thoughts from herself and from the child that was only a memory, the whole of memory, and Janice became flesh and blood in her own right, the right that each one of us has to our own tragedy, however little, and to our share of the pity of great hearts.

At last she looked at John and really saw him for the first time. "And, in the end, what are you going to do with her?"

Her voice was very low, but it was not because he had not heard that John was so long in answering. "I don't —" he began. "I had thought —" he began again. Then he turned his eyes from her, clasped his hands over his crossed knees and said, "When I took her, of course I thought of that. I thought that somewhere I must find a home, a much better home, that *wanted* her."

When two people think of a solution to a problem at the same time, if the problem is vital and the decision momentous in its peculiar way to each of them, they seldom talk about it. It was so now. The lady flashed a look at John and then her eyes grew slowly dreamy. He read her thoughts but turned from them to his own and moved restlessly in his chair, looking for Janice as though she had been too long out of his sight.

A maid came into the room and laid Janice's little smock, dry-cleaned and freshly ironed, on the back of a chair. John gave a sigh of relief. "I think we should be going," he said, and went out to look for Janice.

When he brought her in, her eyes fell on the smock. With her face very grave she backed up to the lady, to have the borrowed dress unbuttoned. Then she slipped it off herself and stood revealed in a straight little underwaist with big flat buttons holding up undies that puffed out just a little at her hips and drew in to a narrow band of openwork and baby lace at her knees. She was more than charming, she was adorable, and the pale brown of her fresh bare limbs cried aloud for kisses.

Very carefully she folded the borrowed dress, laid it on a chair, patted it smooth; then she turned from it with the self-same sigh as that with which many an older woman has turned from gazing on sapphires and rubies, and put on the smock.

As he had done once before that day John stepped quickly to her, picked her up and held her close, her cheek pressed against his. He dared not meet the lady's eyes when he said thank you and good-by. As he hurried toward the gate, still carrying Janice, he could feel her craning her neck to look back over her shoulder and heard her say, "He is so *very* woolly."

John could not sleep that night. He paced the deck for hours, sat for hours in Captain Ike's Bombay chair, and then paced the deck again. The next afternoon, the afternoon of the *Alexandrine's* last day in port, without a word to captain or crew, he took Janice

back to the friendly house and the friendly dog, and left her to dry the tears of a woman only too eager to clutch at the memory of happiness.

He had not been silent as they slowly climbed the long hill, hand in hand, but he had spoken more of the woolly dog than of the lady, and his words had been cheerful and brave as cheerful words are when they come from a heavy heart. But when it came to saying just the three words he had saved for the last, "Good-by, little Mother," he could not. He stooped instead and pressed his trembling lips against her soft mouth. She put her arms around his neck and patted his head.

As he hurried from the house he heard her say patiently, almost wearily, "I know. You are to be my new, new Mamà."

It was late at night when John clamberea aboard the *Alexandrine* and went to his cabin, to stay there through all the early morning noises of departure. When at last he came on deck the Bluff was a mere hump on the horizon. The captain had set the course for the southern trades and the ship was standing out for the long, long run to Melbourne.

It was a breezy blue morning over white water, and Captain Ike as well as the men were alive and happy and looked it.

"Hello, son!" shouted the captain. "What's got inter you an' Mother this mornin'?"

John drew him aside. He had a long explanation ready, but all he said was, "I've done it. I found a home for her."

"Done what?" demanded Captain Ike, the color rising in his cheeks. His loud tone and the way he glanced around drew the mate and a couple of the deck watch.

John set his teeth and faced them. "I've left Mother behind."

They stared at him wide-eyed and speechless. Captain Ike was angry, and when he was angry he followed an invariable rule, invariable ever since he had knocked a man down years ago and spent three terrible days bringing him back to consciousness. He went to his cabin and locked himself in.

The news spread rapidly over the ship and the men, some of them half dressed, gathered in knots. The bo's'n, brushing etiquette aside, clumped down the after gangway and coming back a moment later reported, "All her kit's there, left behind like she was a runaway an' a pauper. The bottle's there, too; the one with the full-rigged ship in it as I made."

The men moved gradually away from where John was standing, even the mate turned his back on him and, discovering that the ship had fallen off half a point, cursed the man at the wheel in full rolling oaths that seemed to echo and bump along the decks which through many weeks had been strangers to profanity.

There is no more bitter fate than to be sent to Coventry by the entire company of a ship at sea. John passed a terrible day. An eternity of silence oppressed him and man and Nature seemed in league to crush him utterly with the sheer weight of unbearable loneliness. The reaching sails and the bowsprit, nodding,

nodding across the interminable crested waves, repeated again and again, long hour after long hour, "Alone, alone."

He turned from the ship, stood against the after rail, and gazed back along the wake, that symbol of the past, so bright and clear near by, so quickly faded in the distance and lost in the endless sea. He was standing like that at night when Captain Ike came up to him and laid a big hand on his shoulder.

"Come down an' have your supper, son."

John shook his head.

"Well, then," said the captain, "let's have it out now. I don't ask you why you done it. I ask you why you done it *that way*? Not givin' none of us a chanst to say good-by."

"I did n't say good-by myself," said John, thickly. "It was all I could do to leave her and run. If I'd had to argue one word, pack her things, if you and the men had all come forward saying good-by, each one giving her something and pulling at her heart, trying to tie a last string to it, where would she be right now? Here with a lot of men, each one so full of himself that he'd rather see a little girl kiddie playing house in the sloppy scuppers of a ship than living in a fine quiet home with a big-hearted woman and — and a big woolly dog. And you all stand around and tell each other how you loved her and —"

"That's all right, son," interrupted the captain quickly, for John's voice was going shaky. "That's all I wanted and all the men will want — jest to see it your way. An' now, I do, son, I do. Only it was

so sudden, like a squall that hits you when you're looking the other way and takes you all aback. Now you tell me the kind of place you found for little Mother." And John did.

Captain Ike was right about the men. He had them aft in odd groups and put them straight so that in the end, far from being estranged, John found himself what he had not been before, and what he never would have become without the incident — part and parcel of the life and the history of the *Alexandrine*.

During the long, free run to Melbourne a vital change of which he was quite unconscious came over him. He made rough purchases from the slop-chest, took his turn at the wheel and at the sheets, picked up knowledge and muscle at the same time and the keen, calm vision of men that stand hour after hour face to face with unlimited space. The taste of salt was ever on his lips, salt tanned his cheeks and sifted into his very blood, making his final assignment to a regular watch a thing as natural and suddenly familiar as a newly charted rock.

At last they reached the port of Melbourne and the moment they were free from the restraining influences of discipline and the ship, Captain Ike gave John such a slap on the shoulder as two months before would have knocked him down. "Bogardus," he said, using John's surname for the first and last time, and pausing to let the significance of the appellation sink in, "you're a man this day."

CHAPTER VI

EVEN the friendliness of Durban, which had seemed overwarm, paled before the flame of Melbourne's too generous hospitality. In the six weeks of the *Alexandrine's* delay John had not time to gain a perspective, and unstayed by Janice's presence he knocked about like a craft that has cast its moorings in a crowded harbor and goes rollicking to the damage and disfigurement of at least its paint.

Quickly satiated with too much rubbing of elbows he welcomed sailing-day with unmixed joy. His memories of Melbourne were feverish to the verge of unpleasantness. He was not conscious of having been defiled so much as he was depressed by the feeling that he had been living on the dead level of the flesh, moving amidst a community, outwardly light-hearted, made up of husbands as unconscious philanthropists and wives as exponents of a new rendering of the old rule, "live and let live."

It was good to forget the taste of saccharine things in the tang of the salt sea, good to look out upon unbroken and unblotted heavens and plow forward into the great ocean that beyond any other material element wipes out the past for man and gives him the sense and the courage of a fresh-washed soul. During the long voyage, three months with luck, Melbourne to

Baltimore without a stop, he learned many things — that distance is the absence of speed, patience the murder of desire, and that modest penny-ante with a dollar-bet limit has powers to break the monumental monotony of a thousand-mile slant of wind.

The long, reaching billows of the Indian Ocean were child's play in comparison with the battling waves of the North Atlantic through which the *Alexandrine* fought on her last leg to her home port and it was with a great deal of pride and no mental reservation that Captain Ike wrote out John's discharge as an able seaman. "There you are, son," he said; "it's the humblest degree there is, but you can't buy it ner hold it with money. Don't you never be ashamed of it."

With more than half his traveling fund still unexpended but with over two years of absence to his credit John appeared before his father. James Bogardus did not attempt to hide his astonishment at his son's development. He had given Godspeed to a boy exceedingly old for his years; he welcomed back a man, a young man whose carriage without being quite soldierly still suggested combat and the trained muscles of an athlete.

"Travel," said the elder Bogardus, "wonderful thing." His keen glance settled on his son and followed him around while his mind gloated on the talks they would have of distant countries and the sights he would see through his son's eyes. But if John had been an enigma before he started on his *grand tour*, he was now a full-grown mystery. In three long sentences he disposed of his entire two years' absence. The first

covered Leipzig and his degree; another, Captain Ike and the *Alexandrine*; and the third sketched into the picture Plymouth, Durban, and Melbourne, the only considerable stops in the whole pilgrimage.

James Bogardus was dazed, his theory of travel demolished. He had had a low opinion of Captain Ike, not low enough to lead him to interfere in any way with the friendship John had struck up with him, but sufficiently marked to make him wonder what intercourse there could be between his son's highly developed mind and the rough and ready mentality of the captain. Eighteen months on a sailing vessel and a mere glimpse of three of the most provincial ports in the world seemed to the professor a most inadequate explanation of his son's development.

He gave up the puzzle and fell back on the consolation that from whatever cause the development had come, it was a solid reality upon which one could build. Within a month the arrangements of years were brought to a triumphant termination and John was duly installed as assistant professor in Romance languages on the understanding that his father would resign the full professorship in his son's favor as soon as the university authorities judged the younger Bogardus competent and old enough to assume the larger responsibility.

James Bogardus would have felt dismay rather than consolation could he have conceived a bird's-eye view of John's chaotic mind at this juncture. The boy had at no time felt a call to be a teacher of Romance languages or of anything else. He had grown into the idea just as one grows, unthinking, into the bonds of

an inherited religion. To some natures such an imprisonment is a boon; to others, those who have sight and are weak, it means galling wounds, but to the world's fighters, it is but a call to arms and to revolt. Though John did not yet know it, he was a fighter born. The youth that was banished from his outward person still reigned in his heart and dazed him. He assumed the assistant professorship with apparent content but his inner spirit took it as a young horse first takes the bit.

James Bogardus occupied one of those houses in light brick and Colonial trimmings that look prim and fresh at the same time, their precise formality softened by a line of white here and there, by lush lawns in summer time and by the gray lace of bare trees in winter. Such a house in town almost always sports gay window-boxes, but in the country shows its sense of the fitness of things by facing a tumult of color with an even and restraining severity.

Inside, it was built for comfort and took every advantage of modern science in sanitation, lighting, and ventilation, at the same time lending itself easily to the sensible modifications which James Bogardus had instituted in anticipation of his son's return. On the ground floor there was a spacious hall, a large, deep-toned library, a sunny dining-room and a drawing-room, converted into a bedroom, to which had been added a bathroom. This, except for the hall and dining-room, was the elder Bogardus's domain, leaving to his son the entire second floor with the exception of the servants' rooms at the back, which were separate and served by their own stairway.

The house was quite strange to John in spite of the fact that his father had occupied it for many years, and struck him as being somewhat new, inside and out; not repulsively new, but new with the newness of a suit of clothes made by an excellent tailor. None the less, he was pleased with it; pleased above all with the thoughtfulness his father had shown in providing for their mutual privacy.

John did not enter upon his new duties without many qualms, first and foremost of which was the fear that he would have to teach Romance languages by day and talk them eternally by night. Consequently he was overjoyed to find that the professorial etiquette of the university forbade talking shop out of school hours and that the elder Bogardus stuck to the rule with a wisdom born of much experience.

This one relief alone made John almost happy but it came too suddenly; it broke the slender link in the relations of father and son before any mutual interest had had time to form into a substitute and left the two quite friendly but inexplicably distant. Neither of them knew why they were distant one from the other, but they realized day by day that they were, and after a first bewilderment gradually sank each into his own sedentary rut.

The professor's eyes would occasionally follow his son wistfully as John strode down the steps and away toward the campus, his brow would pucker in a puzzled frown, but finally his face would light up, rather deliberately, into a look of pride. He might be lonely but he had the consolation of pride in his boy, the

wonder product of his loins and his thoughtful provision.

To John, amazingly restricted in his contacts with American life, those first few weeks of teaching were mentally crowded with impressions, deductions, and readjustments. Without ever having been side by side with American youth he was suddenly brought face to face with it in the worst possible conditions for a fair understanding of the boyish, clean-shaven multitude. He ran into a series of surprises. The first was the discovery of the unbounded extent of ignorance hidden behind the bright faces, the next the appreciation of an equal extent of indifference, and the third a discovery of his own sudden popularity.

The last item would have proved less of a mystery could he have overheard the following conversation:

“Say, get your folks to write for a transfer to something in the Dago line, French, Spanish, or Italian. Kid Bogardus is a holy cinch. It’s a shame to take the money. Just sits there and gases and never bats an eye when you recite, only looks dazed. He’s never picked up his mark card, let alone used it.”

John had the European idea of a university; it never entered his head that he was being paid to be a taskmaster and he did not suspect that the presence of any of his pupils was due to anything but a desire to learn. He was not so much dismayed by the ignorance he encountered as he was filled with pity for the youths who faced so cheerfully so great a handicap. During many a painful recitation he devoted himself to a detached and philosophic study of the humanity at hand,

pinning his faith to the didactic theory that in the course of time the discordant mumblings of his pupils would develop like a budding flower into intelligible phrases.

More than once he shamelessly day-dreamed. To such moments came the creak of rigging, the slosh and taste of salt water, the swaying surge of the *Alexandrine*, deified in memory into a live goddess, a Diana of the waves, wandering in search of vast distances and worlds, and conquering them. Or he would suddenly wake to the soft voice of Janice crying, "Oh! Just Woolly! you are so *very* woolly!"

His classes in French were naturally the largest and the most mixed, made up of youths who thought or whose parents thought it was the thing to know French, of others who had a bent for literature and wanted to read French, and of still others who used the course as a convenient padding to a tenuous curriculum.

His classes in Spanish were also well attended, owing to the fact that the Spanish war and the prospective permanent occupation of the Philippines and closer relations with Cuba had given a boom to that long-neglected language, but here the personnel was well-defined and made up for the most part of shrewd-minded youngsters who foresaw, or whose parents foresaw, the coming money-value of a knowledge of Spanish in the Western Hemisphere. These were the most intelligent if not the most diligent of John's pupils, but like his French students, their indolence was more potent than their need. They believed in erudition by absorption.

The most diligent but by no means the most beloved, was the small group that elected to be initiated into the mysteries of Italian. It was made up of the genus locally called "poler" and classified in a wider world under the appellation of "highbrow." John looked over the small assembly and comforted himself with the thought that he would rather teach them Italian than undertake to make a passable deckhand out of the best of the lot. Together they struggled through the sonorous *Divina Commedia* which became henceforth to John a monstrous comedy, robbed of divinity for all time.

CHAPTER VII

WEEKS passed, months passed. The Bogarduses, father and son, plodded along like a well-trained team of horses, each in his rut. Their joint life began to look like a long, even cart-track with an indefinite promise of convergence hovering always over a distant horizon. James Bogardus had a number of friends, John had made a few, and even these outsiders seemed to play a game of Follow the Leader, the former turning invariably into the library and the latter passing directly upstairs to John's private quarters.

Against this condition both father and son inwardly rebelled. Each was possessed of an active personality, of the magnetism that subconsciously creates an atmosphere of friendship wherever it goes and leaves its owner bewildered on those rare occasions when it fails to work automatically. But almost as a consequence of the strength of their characters they were impotent to resolve their dilemma. Neither could bend toward the other except by a conscious effort, an effort whose mere inception would imply an unwarranted surrender of independence.

James Bogardus could analyze almost anything in others from a trifling individual motive to a national emotion, but he could not analyze himself nor this mysterious son, so intimately of his fiber and of his life,

and yet so far removed. John did not trouble with analysis. His internal youth, never divined by his father behind the immutable calm of his exterior, sensed a division of spirit and accepted it. His father was a stranger; he had always been a stranger.

There are certain nervous affections which strike invariably at persons of grim character combined with superactive imagination, holding them bedridden for years only to be released suddenly by some violent exterior shock. Of such invalids it is commonly said, "There is nothing really the matter with him." So it might be said of the Bogarduses — there was nothing really the matter with them; but they were powerless, nevertheless, held in a thrall that awaited the adventitious mercy of an exterior shock. The shock was on the way.

On two evenings, widely separated, John had heard the entry of several persons to the library from whence muffled, indistinguishable sounds continued to reach him until sleep and the small hours of the morning had come to blot them out. John had thought little and said nothing of the matter, though he had been conscious of an added pin-prick of loneliness on each occasion.

To be alone is nothing; to feel alone is humanity's maximum terror and the sole source of a universal fear of death. The only misery of childhood that continues unabated through all the years of life is the sinking feeling that comes to him who thinks himself "left out." This feeling came to John on the third evening of continued muffled sounds from the library. The double

yet divided life that he and his father were living suddenly seemed monstrous to him. He paced up and down his room, finally went to the top of the stairs and with scarcely a pause descended to the library door. This was not surrender; it was rebellion, attack. He grasped the door knob firmly and turned it. The door was locked.

A hot flush flamed in his cheeks as he rushed up the stairs and quickly locked himself into his own rooms. He was overwhelmed with shame. Had they heard him? Was it altogether imagination that told him there had been a sudden hush in the library? Then came revulsion to still deeper shame. His father had locked him out; not figuratively, but actually, deliberately. He looked at his own door and remembered that it too was locked, locked for the first time. Well, after all, was n't this the logical end of any estrangement? During his momentary embarrassment he had lost every vestige of poise and become palpitatingly young; now he was suddenly old again, older than ever.

The next day was Saturday and John lingered in bed until he heard his father leave the house; then he rose, dressed quickly and went for a long walk, lunched at an inn and whiled away the whole afternoon on the deserted towpath of the somnolent canal. He dreaded coming back to dinner, but dinner was a meal one could not skip without the formality of a previous announcement. He reached his rooms without encountering any one, bathed, dressed, and came down at the first faint stroke of the gong.

He found his father waiting for him in the dining-

room and perceived at a glance that last night's turning of the library door knob had by no means passed unremarked, for James Bogardus was very nervous and his tones did not ring quite true to cordiality when he said, "Ah, here you are at last."

"I suppose you forgot the president's reception," he added more naturally as he saw that his best frock coat and gray striped trousers had attracted and held John's attention.

John nodded. "Forgot all about it," he murmured.

They sat down to a silent dinner, each making a pretense of eating to give the other time to satisfy the demands of normal appetite; but normal appetite has a way of fleeing before emotion and both were glad when the farce of a meal was over and the elder Bogardus said, "Let us go to the library," in the tone of an officer saying, "Fix bayonets!"

Once in the library, Bogardus *père* motioned his son to a deep leathern chair and took his own position with his back to the fireplace, empty of coals for spring was already upon them. John felt that he had been put at a disadvantage the moment he sounded the surprising depths of the chair into which he had been inveigled and started to rise but sank back again in deference to a gesture from his father. It struck him for the first time in many days that his father occasionally possessed a most pleasing presence.

With his hands clasped behind his back under his coat-tails so that the frock coat, buttoned down the front, was drawn sharply up from his slim hips, his bright eyes and dark brows shining out against the soft

gray of his hair and pointed beard, the elder Bogardus deliberately teetered heel to toe and coughed like a boy about to make a speech. John suddenly felt a premonition that he was about to discover that his father was human and slowly relaxed into the hospitable chair.

"A-hem," said Bogardus Senior. "A-hem. I wish to assure you that it has never been my intention, much less my desire, to have any secrets from you and that I am rejoiced at the chance for an explanation provided by last night's — er — incident."

"I'm the one that ought to explain, I think," said John, on an impulse of generosity.

"Not at all," said James Bogardus. "I should have told you about the Five Club long ago. I meant to tell you when you first arrived but the chance didn't come; it never seemed to come. Er—I wish you would ask me some questions."

"But I don't want to ask you questions," protested John. "I'm ashamed of myself. You have a meeting of your club and I come like a busybody trying the door. It was inexcusable and —"

"I said I wished you would ask some questions," interrupted the professor. "I still wish it."

John's lips broke into a quizzical smile. His father had become younger, nearer, something that a son could humor. "Well," he said, "what's your club for?"

"Poker," said James Bogardus.

"Poker!" repeated John in a weak gasp as though he had been butted below the belt.

"Poker," repeated his father, calmly, still teetering

from heel to toe, his bright eyes fixed gravely on his son's face.

John let his head fall back and laughed as he had seldom laughed before, but the elder Bogardus's face remained immobile, almost unconcerned until John drew out a handkerchief and started mopping his eyes.

Then his father asked drily, "Were you laughing at me or at Poker?"

"No, sir," said John. "Neither. I was laughing at myself. I've been such a fool. I had a premonition that I was about to discover you were human but it was such a small premonition —"

His father smiled a slow smile. "I would n't have minded your laughing at me," he said. "One should never defend one's person except when a principle is involved."

"Do you mean me to infer that you consider Poker a principle?" asked John, his face alight with pleasure at the discovery that his father could talk something besides Romance languages.

"It's a principle with me," said James Bogardus, "and I'll tell you why. The American, of late years, has been losing his individuality at an astounding rate. We built our greatness on the rock of religious tolerance and have since descended to the mud-pie level of legislated morals. A majority told us what we must believe and we deemed it monstrous and founded a New World; now the same majority chucks us the dead-letter sop of religious tolerance and we let it gorge itself on intolerance in everything else." He suddenly

stopped teetering. "By the way, this is a mighty big subject. Have you any engagement?"

"I can't imagine an engagement," said John, "that I would n't break to hear you make Puritan and Poker, the calf and the young lion, lie down at peace together."

"Good," said his father. "We were speaking of intolerance. During the last few years this country has been trying to glue a triplet to the Decalogue. There are States where it's against the law to sell a cigarette, more States where it's against the law to sell a drink, and a vast expanse of territory where every time you say Poker! above a cowardly whisper, people jump as though you had rattled the latch on the trap-door to perdition."

He drew one nervous hand from behind his back and pointed the index finger at John. "Now don't be an old woman and misunderstand me. I'm not defending the opium-tainted cigarette, the grog shop, or the gambling hell. I merely say if you educate a man, *breed* him, those things become harmless, but if you bring him up under glass, untempted, you are bound to produce a bovine ideal — soft, sleek flesh, obedient to the prod, a sort of flat-minded, standardized national porker that would cut his throat with his own fore feet if he ever fell into anything deeper than a puddle and had to swim."

John laughed aloud. He was still laughing at himself, joyfully calling himself a fool for having lived long, silent solemn months beside a conversational gold mine.

James Bogardus paid no attention to the interrup-

tion. "We have forgotten the very essence of the word liberty. Liberty means nothing if it does n't carry with it the ennobling freedom of a choice. We talk about a minority fighting the majority as though that were the whole battle. But it is n't. The *big* battle that has always been and that, please God, always will be, is the fight for life of the individual against the herd. It's the old fight for a right to a choice. Let me put the thing crudely: Every man should be as free to take a drink as he is to commit murder."

"But —" stammered John.

"But! But!" exclaimed his father. "You're stubbing your toe against a mere breath of logic. The absolutist that wants to remove all drink from his country to prevent the vulgar from getting drunk should not hesitate to put every individual in solitary confinement to prevent the horror of murder."

"And now do we come to Poker?" asked John.

"Well, yes," said his father, "but not until Ellen has brought us some sandwiches. Talking seems to make me ravenous."

"It can't be talking," said John, smiling. "I'm starving too."

CHAPTER VIII

WHEN they had eaten a surprising number of sandwiches, washed down by a modest glass each of the professor's best Madeira, he settled back in a chair that was own brother to John's and resting his elbows on its arms joined the tips of his fingers in the most approved style for philosophic exposition.

"Draw Poker," he began, "is at once the most individual of all sciences and the epitome of American character. I say science advertently, for the ingenuity of man has invented no game more deliberately based on a knowledge of mathematical and human values combined. The man that calls it a gamble speaks from the depths of ignorance and adds his voice to the persecution that has lowered the maximum test of intelligence to the level of the stock exchange in the mind of an indiscriminating public."

John chuckled aloud, but the professor, unmoved, continued. "It is true that Poker attains flatulence only on a diet of suckers and lambs but I contend that the elimination, or rather, the evolution of what is commonly termed the 'easy mark,' is of distinct benefit to the State and I venture to affirm that if the mere rudiments of the game were taught in our primary schools, New York would have a shorter bread-line on winter evenings. I don't mean by that that the unfortunates

would rather play Poker than eat but that they would never have reached the bread-line at all."

"How do you justify it?" asked John.

"By this assertion," replied the professor, promptly. "Poker is to the intellect what the roughest kind of football is to the body. You will find the man who knows Poker silent in adversity, calm under responsibility, quick in emergency, and slow to purchase a gold brick. Such an equipment, whatever his walk of life, is n't apt to lead him to the bread-line."

John nodded and his smile began to waver.

"Poker," continued the professor, "is the essence of individuality. Take Bridge as a contrast. When I see a crowd sit down to a Bridge drive it reminds me of a quadrille on roller skates. No matter how well you can skate, you're helpless. You raise your eyes on high and pray for a partner that can skate too. And that's the way with Bridge. Even in a decent club I've had an idiot freeze my blood with the casual remarks, 'Partner, I've never read the book. Don't play by it. Depend altogether on card-sense.'"

The professor sat forward. "He does n't mean by that that he has studied the conventions so that he can recognize your play but reserves the right to break them himself. No, sir. Nine times out of ten he means that he's too lazy to read the fundamental axioms of the nicest of etiquettes and so sap-headed that he'd employ a bookkeeper that had never learned arithmetic. He does n't depend on card-sense but on *cards*, on a string of honors that would win the rubber if they were served up indiscriminately on a dumb-waiter.

He's the long and short of a gambler; long on bull-luck, short on intellect."

The professor nodded his head sadly. "And there's only one revenge, hard of access; and that is to get him to apply his principles to one short hour of quiet Draw. But that's by the way. There are two proofs," he continued, "that Poker is not a gamble but a psychological science."

"Only two?" asked John.

"I speak of elementals," said the professor; "proofs that anybody can understand. One is that the greatest living authority on the game is a Scotchman and the other is the fact that the sex line is as marked in Poker as in a Quaker prayer-meeting. So intimately are human nature and logic linked in the game that it is impossible to introduce even the best of woman players without throwing the entire delicate scale of values out of order. You can calculate odds but you can't calculate woman. Woman is a gamble and she has no place in Poker."

The professor stood up, thrust his hands in his pockets, and jingled his keys; then he walked to a panel in the bookcase, unlocked it, and slid back the door. On one shelf were packs of cards, a case of chips, and a bulky manuscript in disorder; on another a meager line of books. "This," he said, running his nail along the books, "is the sadly inadequate bibliography of Poker, and this"—laying his hand on the manuscript—"is my monograph on the game, which is to be published posthumously out of regard for the feelings of the local faculty."

“Do you know, sir,” said John, smiling in spite of the professor’s gravity, “that I’ve gone around for three years under the impression that the only thing you could talk was Romance languages?”

“Romance languages!” repeated the professor, staring vaguely at his son as though he had introduced glaciers into a discussion on calories. “Ah, yes. You overestimated me. I can’t talk Romance languages. But Poker — Look here.” He drew out all the short line of books and spread them on the table. “These,” he said, sorting out three, “are the every-day modern authorities. Very valuable in that they serve to establish usage and even predict natural evolutionary tendencies such as the long-delayed recognition of the initial value of bob-tailed flushes and straights.”

He picked up a thin manuscript, sheets bound in parchment and covered with minute handwriting. “But this,” he continued, “has a value quite different, quite. It is a description in the most liquid of classical French of the *Jeu de Bluff*, in other words Poker with a thirty-two card deck, and was bought by me personally at the sale of the late Comte de Villacque’s library. I treasure it more than any other possession and predict that it will increase in value at the rate of an authentic Goya.”

He tapped a brochure done in brilliant yellow and smiled. “A curiosity,” he said. “The mad ideas of a member of the Rio de Janeiro *Club dos Diarios* on Poker with a thirty-two card deck and a right-bower, right-bower being a Latin euphemism for joker. But interesting, intensely interesting as illustrative of the

tendency of all foreigners to increase the element of gamble at the cost of science."

He waved his hand at the rest of the books. "A hodge-podge of literature on Brag, Straight Poker, Whisky Poker, Stud; in short, all the satellites that twinkle round the radiant planet of Draw Poker. Brag and Straight Poker are obsolete, Whisky Poker, as its name implies, is a diversion for fuddled brains, a sort of Blind Man's Buff, and Stud — Well, I concede to Stud its own peculiar sphere as a heaven-sent relief to three kindred spirits cut off from the rest of mankind. In fact, it has but a single feature that bars it from being a worthy consort to Draw and that is the frequency with which one finds himself in possession of a certainty. That difficulty can be overcome by burying the last as well as the first card. The game then becomes an ideal pastime for cutthroats and millionaires."

He picked up the untidy bulky manuscript and weighed it in his hand. "This, as I told you," he said, "is my monograph. It treats of the satellites I've mentioned in the manner of a *coup de grace*, bending all its constructive energies to the apotheosis of Draw Poker, the establishment of its values, and the standardization of its laws. It will be my monument, my badge as an American and a true Son of the Revolution, for I have written it not only as a defense of the most maligned of games but as a protest against the tyranny of a bigoted majority.

"You may not know it but while two clubs in America and one in England openly governed the codes of

Whist and to-day make the laws of Bridge, there is not one club of any standing in the Anglo-Saxon world that dares back with its authority the standardization of Draw Poker. I have consequently tried to make my exposition scholarly, so scholarly that I trust a combination of American clubs will be shamed into holding hands and publicly establishing the laws of this prince of games for, wherever it immigrated from, it's as American as Yankee nutmegs or the Pilgrim Fathers."

John gave a sigh of satisfaction. "Got them together at last," he said.

His father nodded and continued. "We come now to the ticklish question of stakes. It's a question hard to explain to the lay mind because the lay mind is generally too lazy for intricacies. Let's jog it in the ribs with a paradox. Poker is the only mortal three-sided equation yet discovered. Theoretically, it is made up of three equal parts, any one of which may be equal to the other two at any given moment. These parts are the money on the table, the cards you hold, and The Man That's Sitting Over You, a combination that embraces the entire masculine branch of the mental cosmos. Each of the three is *vital*, as vital as heart, lungs, or liver. Have you ever felt suddenly hollow when somebody said, 'We'll play for love'?"

John nodded and grinned.

"Be glad of that hollow feeling," said his father. "It comes from the instinct that tells you that no game on earth which is founded on the laws of recurrence and chance is ever accurately played except for money. Money, a little more money than he thinks he can

afford, is the only counterweight on earth that will hold man's attention hour after hour and at the same time rub his intellect to a razor edge. There's only one game of chance that can properly be played for love and that's love itself, a pastime with more pitfalls to the square inch than has Poker to the calendar year."

John sighed.

"Are you tired? — bored?" asked his father.

"No," said John, emphatically. "Not tired and not bored. Just a sigh of *recueillement des esprits*."

The professor bowed. "Well, I could go on for hours, but somehow it's too big a field for words. Like every deep philosophy, Poker is a school of silence. How can I describe in words the active meditation, the concentration of thought, of insight as well as sight, that I had to apply month after month to discover that Professor Tremond had that fatal thing in Poker — a habit? When he was going to draw to two pair he always laid his cards on the table, three on one side, two on the other, called for one card, and then split the two. Pardon me. Have you ever —?"

John nodded, smiling. "Penny-ante on the *Alex-andrine*."

"A good beginning," said the professor. "A game in which a dollar bet *looks big to every one sitting in* is just as good Poker and often better than the variety that blooms out in white chips at a hundred dollars apiece. But to get back to Professor Tremond and his habit. One calm, starry night I drew to three aces and filled with a pair of treys. Tremond had made his

habitual draw to two pair and at the raise I knew that he, too, had filled."

The professor's hand went up to smooth his pointed beard. "That was a great moment, one of the moments you have to wait long for, even in Poker. At first I felt a qualm, as though I were shamelessly betting on a royal flush. Then I reasoned it out that if I held a certainty it was no gift of the gods but a reward to untiring vigilance. Also, in the *argot* of the game, Tremond owed me money."

The professor's eyes took on a far-away look. "I knifed him for the limit. He knifed me back. It became monotonous. I called him, out of pity, with about the last hundred I had at the bank on account current. Speaking again in the *argot* of the game, he still owes me money. That was the spring I cabled you I was n't coming over after all."

"What!" gasped John. "You lost? But —"

"Exactly," remarked the professor, calmly. "But. That's the unfading glory of Poker. There's always a But. To speak accurately, the chances against a But of some kind are exactly 649,739 to one."

"Then," said John, musingly, "Professor Tremond must have broken his rule, held up threes and drawn one to a kicker."

"No," said his father, solemnly, "he did n't break his rule. He drew to two pair, all right — two pair of *kings*, and — and the card he discarded was an ace."

He paused until John's eyes lit up with comprehension of the importance of that valueless ace. "You see," he went on reminiscently, "Tremond might have

thought I'd made a monkey draw to a three-card straight flush, absolutely the only hand out against him. But he was n't backing that chance, good as it was. What he backed was a little discovery of his own and he milked it dry."

"What was it?" asked John.

"Simply this," said his father, "he had discovered that *I* had a habit — a habit of looking for habits in Poker."

He sat down and sank back into the big chair. "Depths upon depths," he murmured. "Can any other game on earth match the poignant illustration I've just put before you? May you live to see our country turn back from the flesh-pots and the chattering calls of Bridge to a game that leans on no spoken word or partner's purse but holds you through the short hours of the night enthralled by the silent eloquence of the money on the table and the cards you hold. Poor old Tremond! The Five Club never saw him again but he was a sportsman. The last thing he said was, 'Tell Professor Bogardus I feel mean dying like this. *It is n't playing the game.*'"

CHAPTER IX

JOHN dated one of his rebirths from that breathless evening in the library. It seemed to him as though for years he had been walking round and round his father, always at the same distance, always impressed and depressed by an impregnable exterior that invited and denied at the same time, only to stumble at last and bump against the secret spring of a trick door. He had walked in; for the first time he saw his father from the inside. The things he found there, things to love and things to laugh at, made him feel like a child in a treasure house, continually rubbing his lamp of Aladdin, continually astounded.

During all their leisure hours, he followed his father around, gave him a new affection that kindled affection, sounded him on every topic under the sun, led him on to disclose qualities he had never before possessed and, quite unconsciously, molded him; for there is nothing that affects a man so vitally as the belief in him, the faith and the overestimation of those about him. In other words, a father can still be born when he is about forty-eight years old.

The Bogarduses became inseparable. They took long walks together, played golf together, and sometimes, late in the still, warm nights of spring, strolled for hours on the silent campus, peopled for the elder not

alone with his own memories but with the long string of inherited memories that throng the campus of every old college and make it when most deserted most full of goodly company.

As James Bogardus initiated his son into mysteries, lichen-stained and obscured by the fertile imagination of a dozen generations, told him the worn but unwritten tale of the Gardener's Daughter and, in a hushed hour, the history of the single, hidden grave where a young girl lies alone and unashamed amid the dwellings of a thousand ever-changing men, he felt the thrill of many another father who along those same old byways has first met his boy face to face. He discovered his son in no less measure than his son had discovered him, and the discovery filled him with pangs, with regrets, as though the wife he had so passionately loved had not died indeed but had lived on beside him and he, self-blinded and dull, had failed to see and feel her there.

In a few weeks he aged perceptibly but his age was more lovable than his erect and independent manhood. He began to love his boy as he had loved the boy's mother and jealousy sprang up in him for the years in his son's life that were a blank to him. He saw them as a great sweep of smooth sand upon which his finger had not written, a desert dotted with the dry shells of dry reports on scholarship and deportment.

He was consumed by the deadly inquisitiveness that goes hand in hand with all jealousy. He began to probe and to try to relive the panorama of his boy's life that he might, even at this late date, force himself into the picture. He was not afraid, for he believed

that the future could hold no shock that would shake him as had the sudden realization of his own long detachment, no less cold and cruel for having been unconscious.

The conversations in the library adopted a wider and wider range. To John they were wholly satisfying but in his father they awakened a yearning he could not fathom. He strove to talk back through the years to the child in his son but was met at the very door of yesterday by an equal, and had to talk man to man. It was a riddle he was soon to read.

They had been talking of women and so at one did James Bogardus feel with his son that not till the conversation was well under way and had settled into the sure lines of accepted premises did his eyes fix in sudden perception of how far their minds had drifted on that troubled sea — and together. What right had he to talk to his son like this? By what right did his son understand him, did they understand each other?

His glance settled on John's keen face and stayed, searching deeper and deeper for the revelation from which he already began to shrink. The boy's combination of youth and assured age came suddenly nearer, stood out in bold contrast. Youth sang a song in his shining eyes, in the glow of his dusky cheeks, in the squaring of his shoulders, but woven with the song, holding it to earth, was a sober undertone, the flat minor of knowledge.

"When I was your age," said James Bogardus, after a long pause, "women were not yet a mystery to me. An illusion is never a mystery. At your age I looked

on women as one blinded by light. Hair, flesh, legs — such terms would never have entered my descriptive thoughts. Woman was not flesh and blood so much as an essence of humanity, crowned with ambrosial locks, a being whose movements were intoned to the measure of *vera incessu patuit dea*. I could not imagine woman as subjected to the rougher exigencies of nature. Such facts as had been forced upon me were powerless to crop the wings of my conception and for many a pulsing day I believed that the faint scent of a tiny handkerchief came from the tiny hands that held it, because I *wanted* to believe it. But you — you —”

A slow flush had risen in John's cheeks as he listened. He fixed his eyes on his father's face and read there the eager question held back, as are so many questions, by the fear of bald words. He waited but his father did not go on.

“I skipped that part of life,” said John at last. He moved restlessly in his chair and his eyes wandered. “Do you remember the Mansinis?”

“What? Who?” said the professor, his mind striving to take the violent turn. “Mansinis? Yes, I've got it now. They were the couple I left you with in Florence. Taught you Italian.”

John nodded. “Well,” he said, “she was a bad woman.”

A long silence, like a curtain, fell on his words; not a dividing curtain but a curtain that cuts off the world and makes intimacy absolute beyond mere nakedness, the shrinking intimacy of raw flesh. The ticking of the clock in the hall became first audible, then loud.

Silence surrendered to tiny sounds such as the infinitesimal crackling of drying wall-paper or the buzzing of a fly's wings against glass.

"But Florence!" said the elder Bogardus at last, hoarsely. "Florence!" He forced each word out. "It is incredible. You were a boy, a mere child!"

"I was a child when I went there," said John, simply, his eyes on the floor. When he raised them they met such a sight as a few weeks ago would have been unbelievable, incongruous, grotesque, but that to-night seemed but a natural culmination, a logical consummation of all that had gone before. Two tears had sprung from his father's eyes and were slowly crawling down his cheeks.

Love, pity, self-recrimination, seethed through James Bogardus's mind. His eyes, moist as they had not been during ten long, unseeing years, stared at his son. He clasped his hands to stop their trembling and then, aware for the first time of the tears on his cheeks, he sought hastily for a handkerchief.

"My boy," he said, trying to smile, "Good night. Good night."

"Good night," said John, with quick understanding, and hurried from the room.

It was still early, too early to go to bed. He left the house and wandered across the town into the campus. The memory of his father's tears followed and troubled him. Had he been right to tell? Could he not have foreseen the wound, deep beyond healing, that his words must leave? He sat down on a bank, grassy and soft with the first thick coat of spring, and thought

it out. His eyes wandered around the shadowy campus and over the multitudes of subdued lights that glowed like sleepy eyes from bulky dormitories and left the other buildings gloomy by contrast, plunged in dignified slumber.

No, he had been neither right nor wrong; he had had no choice. From the moment that he and his father discovered each other they had moved inevitably from revelation to revelation until they passed from darkness to ultimate light, and it would be cowardly to cavil at the price. For himself, he was glad; glad at the ending of mystery, at the passing of distance, content even with the tears that must have cost his father much but that had washed away the last crumb of the hateful wall that had stood between them.

He rose and wandered listlessly from scene to scene which he thought had grown familiar but to-night, without his father beside him to link present and past, without his father's eyes through which to see, the silent campus was strangely unpeopled, a vast emptiness that echoed back an emptiness within him. He became suddenly lonely. He was amazed, dismayed, that the love he had awakened in his father, far from saving him from feeling alone, had but opened his eyes to his own enduring solitude. What place had he in these walks, hallowed not by days but by years and generations to the hearts that loved and owned them?

He choked on the thought that in will and in body he had returned to his native land only to find himself no part of its vital fiber. Had he been cut off too early from the parent stock, traveled too long a road

on the broad highway of life ever to come back to that inner circle of familiar habit, communal morals and treasured prejudices that bind each human being to a single place and time, the place and time of his particular sources?

And women? For months women had not entered his head, but now his thoughts turned back to Signora Mansini, yesterday tucked so far into the past, to-day so unforgettably near. From her they passed on in long leaps to a French grisette, a Spanish singer of provincial zarzuelas, a Portuguese landlady, to the languid woman in Durban, to a memory of Melbourne, and finally to the dull contrast of the friendly professors' wives that lived their placid lives under the shadow of these placid walls never dreaming how small an index was their clustered constellation to the vast firmament of the world of women.

Finally, he thought of his classes. What a bore they had been during these last few days, what a farce from the very beginning! He passed all his pupils in review and ended by smiling ruefully at himself for he felt as though half of him were the kindly Abraham pleading for Sodom and Gomorrah and the other half the angelic ambassador, kindly, too, but inexorably just.

Was this to be his life, bound to a daily wheel, not teaching wings to fly but watching for pin-feathers to sprout? What about his own pinions? Could he ever soar upon them here or would they raise him, at best, only to hover in a wide prison like a captive balloon?

In the weeks that followed that confessional night he found his father more tender, more thoughtful than ever, but also possessed of a new shyness that followed oddly on his old-time, straightforward independence. He would sit alone by the hour and brood over his son, not bitterly, but with the dazed wonder of the older generation realizing for the first time the new. He had no more questions to ask, and now when they were together, knowing all, he was content to talk charmingly of abstract things, happy when he saw the light of interest in his son's eyes.

During these same weeks John was restless because he was gradually coming to a momentous resolve. A few months ago he had felt that he owed much not to his father but to a stranger who happened to be his father, and one had to be punctilious with debts to strangers. But now all that was changed. He had come to feel that he and his father owned their fund of life in common and that what he owed, he owed to himself. He was striving to determine just what was that debt.

It was a ludicrous incident that brought him to the climax of a final decision. On the last night of the term he was delayed well beyond his dinner-hour, reading over the written tests of his largest class. As he walked past one of the big Sophomore eating clubs he was struck by the unusual pandemonium going on inside, and a moment later was almost knocked off his feet by an entire pie that sailed out of an open window and landed squarely on his neck.

On a quick impulse he gathered it up into a soggy

ball and hurled it back. It was a good shot. He could see it splattering its way down the full length of a long table and the roar of surprise and rage that answered this sudden flank attack told him better than words that the original assault upon himself had been not only unintentional but unremarked.

John was filled with delight and was wishing he could go in and join battle when an outraged face appeared at the window. There was a shout and a moment later the entire club was rushing for the doors. John knew that he could not have been recognized in the outdoor twilight. For a moment he hesitated, then, with a grin, he took to his heels, pulling his soft hat well down over his face as he ran straight up the main street, bedlam at his back.

The crowd was growing like a rolling snowball and gaining fast when he doubled into the lane that led to his father's house. The multitude doubled, too, and was just in time to see him calmly fitting his latchkey to the door. First came wonder, then a deep, deep silence and finally stealthy retreat punctuated here and there by a chuckle or a phrase.

"Say, fellows, let's keep this mum."

"Sure. So easy! Not over a thousand saw us come down the street!"

"Is it one on us? Oh, no. Not at all!"

CHAPTER X

WHEN, on the following morning, the last day of the scholastic year, John met his French class in unusual force, his pupils had every reason to expect that he would follow an ancient custom and dismiss them after a few words of formal farewell and an announcement of the date on which he expected to give out the results of their final tests, but their attention was immediately caught by the orderly pile of their examination papers, thickly interspersed with marked slips, placed ready to hand on his desk.

For the first time in his pedagogic career John was nervous. He reached out jerkily toward the examination papers as though he were about to distribute them, changed his mind, drew back his hand, braced his shoulders, eyed the class searchingly as he had never eyed it before, and began to speak. He spoke in French, slowly, clearly, and at the end of the first sentence paused and swept his glance from face to individual face. Everywhere his eyes were met by good-natured but puzzled incomprehension.

His lips curved into a smile and then slowly straightened. He began to speak again, still in French, but now his eyes left off looking at his pupils and wandered over their heads to the farther wall, to the open windows, and sometimes to his own hands clasped on the desk before him. His introduction was measured,

almost ponderous, but once that was over he spoke rapidly, with the masterly unconcern for his audience of the finished classroom lecturer.

He declared that it was his intention to envisage the French language as a woman, to examine her paternity, play with her in the cradle, nurse her safely past the danger of bowlegs, stand her on her own feet and watch her learn to walk, define her flirtations and assist at her marriage, bringing her finally to the glorious maturity whose liquidity, tonal perception and subtle finesse proclaimed her not only feminine to the tips of her caressing fingers but queen to all the idioms of the earth.

As he talked, for his own sole edification, he reveled in asides of wit, in slurs, and in an occasional panegyric. He dubbed the very name, *francisca*, the indelible Teuton brand on the face of Gaul; he emphasized the harmonizing influence of all Gallic assimilation and expressed his doubts as to whether *écrevisses au naturel* could ever have attained their present price and consumption in the restaurants of Paris under their original barbarian patronymic. He referred to the euphonious *choucroute* as a living example of this tradition of harmony, a word whose unaided inherent qualities carried its metamorphosis into the vegetable kingdom and enabled man for the first time to think of cabbage as a fragrance rather than a smell.

It is a pity that John could not have assisted as a spectator at the comedy he was enacting. He and he alone could have appreciated to the full the initial look of puzzlement on his hearers' faces, changing gradually

to wonder and finally to admiration as the conviction stole upon the class that it was witnessing a sporting event of no mean order. Watches were stealthily drawn out and a dollar-pool was started as to how long he could keep it up. The ignorant appealed to those they deemed less ignorant as to what the lecture was about, but once the class was satisfied that all sat in an equal mental fog, whispering ceased and every man sat spellbound and attentive, held by the charm of a sheer *tour de force*, unintelligible in detail but easily visualized in its general massive contour.

With his peroration John came back to his original figure and pictured modern French as a matured woman at the apex of her charms. His enthusiasm brought a glow to his cheeks, his eyes flashed, and his words mounted in a steady ascent to a sure climax. His ardor was infectious. In the words of one of the students, he put it across. When his voice descended in a cascading fall to a final period the whole class burst out into spontaneous applause.

After a short silence an accumulated sigh went up; men stretched, and two lucky ones gathered in the dollar-pool and divided it to an accompaniment of shuffling feet. John reached out, picked up the pile of examination papers, and passed it to a pupil for distribution.

"Gentlemen," he said in English, "I have tried to prepare you for a shock. You are all marked zero."

A gasping stillness fell on the room, followed almost immediately by excited protests and then by remonstrances.

"You can't do it, sir."

"The Dean won't stand for it."

"I assure you, sir, it is n't *done*."

"Ask your own Old Man."

They were all friendly and all eager to save John from himself. Jack Holson, for whom he had once had a faint hope, stood up and assumed spokesmanship. "Look here, sir. D' you know what 'll happen to you? You 'll get the sack. Just take back these papers and grade them up a bit. We all know they 're rotten and we all deserve flunking, but you 've got to shade it for your own sake. It would be a good idea to let us draw lots for three or four to pass. There 's many a prof that 's felt like flunking a whole class, but they all stop short of it because they know it simply won't go."

"That 's right, sir," said another solicitous voice. "If you stick to it Johnnie Dugan 'll be the only member of the faculty to see you off at the station."

John laughed with the rest of them at this reference to the ancient campus police force and then passed his smiling glance from one to another of the faces before him. He was proud of these boys; he could see they were all in earnest and thinking not at all of their own plight but of his. With a thrill he realized that they liked him.

"Fellows," he said, coloring at the friendly audacity of the word, "I 'm sorry, but I 'll have to stand pat. You see, if I did n't flunk the lot of you I could n't consistently flunk myself and that 's what I 've done. There 's a duck's egg after all our names, mine included, and it *fits*. When you grow up I don't want

you drinking to my faint memory at reunions in milk and water. I want you to remember this occasion as a general knock-out where all parties concerned landed outside the ropes. If we've only been bumped hard enough and keep thinking about it long enough perhaps your sons will come here with a different idea of a university and find a different kind of man to help it grow. That's all, except that I hope you'll enjoy individually the continuation of the long holiday we've spent together."

"Yay! Yay!" yelled the class, all agrin.

Jack Holson sprang to his feet and raised his arms. "Now, fellows," he shouted, "everybody up and give a Tiger for Kid Bogardus!"

When the last of the class filed out, the walls were still reverberating the thunder of the staccato cheer that John had more than once seen spur the college team to superhuman effort and to victory. He felt a glow within him as though, after all, his pedagogic year had not gone quite for nothing. The shuffling of feet in the hall paused, ceased, and gave way to a continued murmuring. Presently Jack Holson came back.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said, with a twinkle in his eye, "but we'd like to know if you're going to hand your other classes the same lemon. We're not just curious, but we'd hate to spoil it for them by yapping if — if —"

"I see," said John, with a grin. "Better keep mum till after my Spanish session."

"What about the Poler Brigade?" asked Holson.

John smiled at himself for recognizing at first hear-

ing the popular nickname of his Italian class. "Oh," he said, "I'll pass that lot. You can't use the rod of correction on people that would take it for a guillotine."

"No, I suppose not," said Holson, wistfully. "Good-by, sir, and thank you."

That night the elder Bogardus invited his son into the library immediately after dinner. For a moment John thought his father had already heard of his drastic revolt and gave a sigh of relief. He had dreaded dealing directly the blow to the professor's life-long ambition. But almost immediately he realized that the blow was yet to fall. James Bogardus sat down calmly at his big writing desk, leaned back in the swivel chair, and placed his fingers tip to tip. "Can you guess what I want to talk over?" he asked.

"N-no," stammered John.

"My resignation," said the professor. "You will remember —"

"Father," interrupted John. "Forgive me, but I've got something to tell you, something that comes first, and — and I don't know how to say it."

"Something that comes first?" repeated the professor, looking puzzled but courteously patient.

"I — I've beaten you to it," blurted out John.

"Beaten me to it?" repeated the professor again, his lip curling fastidiously at the phrase. "Beaten me to what?"

"To resignation," said John. "I resigned this afternoon and there's no shadow of a doubt as to its being accepted."

The professor let his chair down slowly and gripped

the edge of his desk. "*You* resigned!" he exclaimed. "What do you mean? Why?" He looked dazed.

John moved nervously in his chair; then raised his eyes squarely to his father's face. "I don't know that I can tell you," he said, "or that you'll understand even if I do get it into words. I've known for a long while that I did n't want to teach Romance languages but I did n't know till just lately that I could n't. It's hard for me to explain it. I did n't begin to see things clear until that night I told you about the Mansini woman. Up to then you had been a sort of stranger to whom I owed money, life, my future. But that night —"

"That night," interrupted the professor, the dazed look passing from his eyes, "you saw what I saw, that I was grossly, shamefully, in debt to you."

"No! No!" protested John, the tears starting to his eyes. "I did not. It is n't true. What I felt was that once we were no longer strangers, once we were just father and son, there could n't be a question of debt and that the cruelest thing I could do to you or to me was to hide myself, dwarf myself."

"What do you mean?" asked the professor, wearily, as though he would rather be alone to think things out.

"After I left you that night," said John, "I went out on the campus. It was a lovely night, so warm and smelling of spring. Everything was very still and I wandered over all the paths we've followed so often together and I felt alone, more alone than I'd ever felt before. I got to thinking about my work and I saw that it was just a farce, a long farce that could only save itself from banality by a climax."

"So you prepared the climax without talking it over with me?" asked the professor.

"I *had* to," said John. "It was only without you that I could feel alone, could see myself, and this is what I saw. That one can't really teach without being *planted*."

"Planted?" repeated the professor with raised eyebrows.

John nodded his head emphatically. "Yes," he said. "Planted in the world in which you labor, or in its traditions, or sympathies, or — or in content. You've got to belong first and teach afterwards. I don't expect you to understand that or how I came to feel it. It's even a bit vague to me but powerful just as the biggest truths are vague and potent. Perhaps there's some place where I belong but it's not here. I think that, for a while, I belong to youth. I want to rough-house."

"To *what*?" cried the professor.

"Rough-house," said John, coloring, and told his father about his outbreak of the night before when he had hurled back the soggy pie.

The professor smiled and then sighed. "My boy," he said wistfully, "could n't you have told me all this, about not wanting to teach three years ago? If you'd only said one word, even after you came back from South Africa, I would have known you were n't ready. I could have waited."

John shook his head. "No," he said and stopped. His eyes met his father's and saw understanding dawning in them. "I could n't tell you, then," he finished,

and looked away. "I did n't know," he continued quickly. "How could I know?"

The professor sighed again, deeply, then picked up a paper cutter and tapped the desk to steady his nerves. "And you're sure you could n't have planted yourself here, taken root if you'd held out?"

"I don't know," said John, doubtfully. "Perhaps, if I could have afforded the price."

He would have had no doubts as to his ability to root himself could he have witnessed the Faculty Song parade going on at that moment on the campus and heard a hundred lusty voices roaring out the doggerel of a new verse.

"Here's to Bogardus, we called him Kid,
We thought he was easy, so we did,
But now we know that we're the marks,
He's a Kid with teeth that bites and barks.

Hurrah! Hurrah! for sword and drum!
Here they come! Rub-a-da-dum!
Looking as if they'd been off on a bum,
The Faculty of the College, O!"

CHAPTER XI

JOHN left the room feeling exhausted and went straight to bed. His father sat on for a quarter of an hour plunged in thought. Finally, with a deep sigh, he arose, picked up his hat, and went out of the house, walking slowly toward the campus. He knew so well the scene he was approaching that the first distant sound of voices singing in the night brought it all before him, vividly near.

Old, old walls, ivy-colored, stately in associations, on the steps at their feet a mass of youth, a glow of pipe fire, and the flare now and then of a match lighting up a blurred circle of young faces, tragic with the pain of farewell. Before them, the glimmering of lights in foliage, the soft depths of long shadows broken by mounds of cushions on which reclined proud paternity and youthful, sisterly beauty, decked in bright eyes, glowing cheeks, dimity and chiffon. Here, there and everywhere undergrads and overgrads sprawling on the grass.

Never before had James Bogardus realized all that that beloved open-air cathedral of Gothic elms had meant to him. Now he understood what John had striven so hard to make clear. To give true service one must be planted, planted in traditions, in sympathy, or content. It was a great truth, a vital truth. Then a new thought came to overwhelm him and plunge him

deeper in his mood of despondency. In all his ambition he had borne no gifts to his son. He had robbed him, robbed him of the sources of life and happiness, of a continuing abiding-place.

He was walking slowly, almost reluctantly, towards the lights that were already gleaming near, when a voice hailed him from a deep shadow, the voice of the very man whom he was about to seek.

"Hello, Bogardus," called the Dean in low, penetrating tones, "I was just going to your place."

"Were you?" said the professor, dully. It seemed to him that the Dean spoke almost cheerfully; he could not have heard.

"Come," said the Dean, taking hold of the professor's arm, "let's walk away from the noise. Where's John?"

"Gone to bed," said the professor.

"Did he tell you?" asked the Dean, and chuckled.

James Bogardus stopped in his tracks, trembling. "He did," he said coldly. "Did it strike you as being funny?"

The Dean's grim mouth quirked into a smile. "Not funny, exactly, but admirably humorous. I wish you could have been in my place this afternoon. Several of John's pupils came to me not in a body but singly, spontaneously. I got the story from them, all but what John talked about in French, and, of course, the fact that not one of them understood a word of that is his slight vindication for wholesale slaughter."

"You're talking in English," said the professor, "but I don't understand a word of what you're saying."

"So," said the Dean, "he did not tell you after all."

"He merely said he'd sent in his resignation," answered the professor, "and that there was no chance it would n't be accepted."

"Let me tell you the whole business," said the Dean and proceeded to reconstruct John's comedy. He repeated, almost word for word, the little speech in English with which John had ended up. "That was a great and courageous utterance," he commented. "I wish I'd had the nerve to make that speech myself twenty years ago. As the boys say, it got across. Holson told me he had n't thought much about having sons but that if I'd arrange to keep John here he'd undertake to supply some youths with the new idea of a university as rapidly as possible. He said he knew the arrangement was in the nature of a bribe but that bribes to colleges were in the spirit of the times. A thoroughly impudent and attractive young man."

"What did you tell him?" asked the professor, an eager gleam in his smiling eyes.

"I told him I had n't seen John's letter yet, that it was lying on my desk where John could come and take it back unopened if he felt like it in the morning."

"You said that?" cried James Bogardus.

"One moment," remarked the Dean, drily. "That is n't all I said. I told Holson to gather in all the zero papers and take them to you for re-marking, then I talked to him about John. I showed him that the university could afford to keep John but that I doubted if he could afford to stay."

The Dean paused in his stride and gripped the pro-

fessor's arm. "Bogardus," he continued, "just think a moment. A man does n't burn his bridges behind him like that and then crawl back over a rickety friendly plank. If he really wants to come back there's only one way and that is to breast the flood and *swim* back. Take the word of a man that's old even to you. Let your boy go out and find himself, never mind where he brings up. He's a fighter and a fighter lives not by bread alone but by battle."

James Bogardus, his heart wonderfully cheered, left the Dean and walked home. He saw a light in John's bedroom, went up, and knocked softly on the door.

"Come in!" called John.

The professor walked in and found his son lying in bed, an open book, face down, at his side. His eyes were brilliantly feverish and looked across the room anxiously as though they dreaded a renewal of hostilities.

"Poor devil," said the professor, pleasantly, "I know what it is to be tired out and lie in bed by the hour trying to get your eyes to close."

The look of anxiety passed from John's face. "You've hit the nail on the head," he said, smiling.

The professor thrust his hands in his pockets and stood teetering from heel to toe. "I've been out for a walk. I feel fine."

The words and the dearest of all the professor's poses were like a tonic to John. He looked into his father's bright eyes, shining out from their distinguished frame of dark eyebrows and soft gray hair and beard, and grinned.

"I see you want to tell me about it," he said. "Sit down and chat. I'm not tired any more."

The professor perched himself on the edge of the bed. "I ran into the Dean and we had a long talk. . He told me what happened in your classrooms to-day. He said he had n't seen your resignation yet and that if you wanted to in the morning you could go to him and get your letter back unopened."

A quick frown came to John's face.

"Don't frown, please," said the professor, calmly. "The Dean seemed to know you better than I did, for he went on to say that after you'd burned your bridges behind you like that he could n't see you crawling back over a rickety, friendly plank."

"Did he say that?" exclaimed John, eagerly.

The professor nodded. "And a lot more. He said he wished he'd had the nerve to make your little speech, the one in English, twenty years ago and the courage to back it up. He said the university could afford to keep you but he did n't think you could afford to stay."

John felt his whole body suffused with a glow of well-being. He lay very still and knew that he would soon be drowsy. Suddenly, with his father still sitting there slowly swinging one foot to and fro, John fell sound asleep. He awoke to find the professor gone and the early summer sun blazing in at the windows. For a moment he lay quiet, collecting the thoughts that the night had scattered, then he sprang out of bed, his brain already seething with a dozen plans for the future.

Generic man is still a vagabond at heart. The day

that sees him freed from the duties of a forced routine has a sweetness all its own; it is like a long lazy sigh that lifts an unsensed burden and leaves one languidly content. On a common impulse the Bogarduses, father and son, strolled into the library directly after breakfast. It seemed strange to them to be there together in the morning but it was a pleasant strangeness, part and parcel of sudden freedom.

"I've been worrying about you," said the professor, nodding his head at John. "What are you going to do? I've trained you for just one thing and it happens that it's a thing that don't suit you. That's largely my fault and I'm willing to help you all I can, but —"

"But you know," interrupted John, smiling, "that I could n't stand living on you indefinitely."

"Exactly," said the professor. "So we come back to my question. What are you going to do? How are you going to make a living?"

"Father," said John, still smiling, "I've heard you rail more than once at pragmatism, America's new practical philosophy. I agree with you that it's a curse and I grieve to tell you that you yourself are tainted. You're an unconscious pragmatist, the worst kind."

"Prove it," said the professor, bristling.

"Out of your own mouth," said John, laughing. "Take any million American fathers and you'll hear them singing to themselves in chorus and to their sons, 'How are you going to make a living?' Out of the million I doubt if there's a baker's dozen that asks, 'What are you going to do with your life?' How I'm

going to make a living does n't interest me in the slightest."

The professor stared at his son. "You really mean it!" he exclaimed. "I — I congratulate you."

"Do you remember the letter of credit you gave me?" said John. "You never asked me about it after I came back. Well, it's still good enough to take me around the world a couple of times."

"Perhaps," said the professor, "if you work your way on a wind-jammer."

"I was n't working on the *Alexandrine*," said John, gravely. "That's just the point. I was living."

The professor pondered for a moment, then his face lightened. "I believe you," he said. "I've always wondered how you grew so quickly to man size. Under the circumstances," he continued after a pause, "I'm almost sorry your mother left you a little money. You may keep going around the world indefinitely."

"How much?" asked John.

"Five thousand dollars ten years ago; must be about eight now," said his father. "I suppose you think you could live forever on that?"

"Easily," said John with a light-hearted laugh.

James Bogardus's plans for the summer had not included his son, consequently there was no great wrench to their parting. He asked John which way he was headed, but John scarcely knew. He said he was going to New York to feel around. Only a couple of hours ago a dozen plans had tripped over each other in his mind; now they were all a jumble and he felt vaguely as though his thoughts were shackled by the little uni-

versity town. He could not imagine it as a starting place as did its thousand students. He was still professor enough to see it in reverse, a quiet place where roads end.

BOOK II

. . . A crystal land of prisms; of shining facets and cutting edges.

CHAPTER XII

NEW YORK held John for weeks before he thought he saw it clearly. At first it dazed him, but by the time his heels were sore from the hard pavements, the island city began to take shape. It seemed to him a monster octopus, gorging on a varied humanity, each of its tentacles devoted to a special brand.

West Street fed on the flotsam that to-day parodies the name of mariner. Its back yard sucked in negroes in a cloud, dark, almost menacing, so infinitely was it divorced from the puffy white of cotton fields. South Street and its byways breathed in denatured Italy and further north indigestible Chinatown defied assimilation and marched uncompromisingly with the vast demesne of the unwashed and unshaven Yid, two muddy confluent rivers that refused to mix.

Around the ancient banner of Brevoort the French colony sat tight and held her skirts from contact with less cleanly mobs, while from her side reached out the mighty arm of the Avenue, feeding in an interminable progression on the rich, the near-rich, Harlem, Yonkers and Greeley's young man, coming back like a prodigal son from the West.

It took a stifling, hot morning in July to wake John up to a sudden vision of truth. He saw that after all he had n't seen clearly. New York was not an octopus

but one of the elementary starting places of the earth, so great a starting place that it was a place to come back to as well, a sort of cycle of humanity in miniature.

From the window of his tiny hall-bedroom in a lower West Side street he looked up through the iridescent waves of the city's still heat and saw mile-high clouds sailing inland. They were cool and white and lolled lazily on a breeze that jumped the barrier of the city's serrated battlements but vaguely promised to come to earth far afield in the friendly open.

John made haste to wing that way himself. He packed all his things and stored them, arranged with his bank to send him currency of the smallest denominations on demand, filled his pockets with sandwiches and took a car to the edge of the city. He laughed at his own amazement on discovering that however one may feel on lower Broadway, New York is not really a thousand miles from the country. An hour on foot carried him well out on the open road, Hudson's river on his left, shimmering through trees; on his right, mounded hills, pretentious homes, and occasional supercilious blooded cattle in paddocks that felt their master's money and feed.

Evening found him at Tarrytown. He was standing in the old burying ground, looking down and laughing at the quaint little church and the bridge beyond, where Ichabod Crane had his immortal encounter with the Headless Horseman, when a thunderstorm that had been threatening for an hour suddenly broke in a deluge. He looked around for the nearest cover and spied the deep embrasure of the entrance to a vault. He crawled

in and with his back against the iron door looked out upon the spectacle of the storm.

There are two equal measures of content, a cat having her fur rubbed the right way and a man, sitting snug and warm, watching a rainfall. John was more tired than he knew and all the more glad of a rest. He ate his last sandwich and suddenly dropped off to sleep. When he awoke, stars were blinking in at him from a clear sky and his feet felt almost frozen. He took off his coat, wrapped it around his legs, and went to sleep again to awake in the morning to a sharp hunger and a vague feeling of disappointment at having passed a dreamless night in such propitious surroundings. Never again would he read with a thrill the tale of Rip van Winkle.

He crawled out of his burrow, stretched till his bones cracked, washed his face and head in water from a rain-filled urn, and then turned and laughed aloud at the morning sun. Down the slope and beyond a stone wall he saw the white gleam of the highway under trees. When he reached it he stood for a long moment, trying to decide which way to turn. On one hand lay New York, enticing, still teeming with unsolved riddles and vague promises of some great adventure; on the other, the placid country where cool breezes dropped to rest at night.

Without definite volition, John turned away from the city. It was the long reach of the road that drew him. A funny thing is the open road. Almost every man has hit it once in his life and the ones that never do, stifle a long ache in their hearts. But as John plunged

along, keeping step with the surge of the morning blood in his veins, his mind was not absorbed by ponderings as to whither his steps and his new freedom were taking him — it was entirely given up to a pre-vision of ham and eggs.

During the days that followed he had long hours of solitude during which he might have put the house of his life in order had not his youth constantly stepped between his two selves, the self trained to manhood and erudition by Captain Ike and the professor, and the self that was a young colt bolting with the bit between his teeth.

Whenever he tried to lay sober plans for his future something invariably turned up to send his thoughts a-wing; a burst of meadow in bloom, freckled children at play, new smells familiar by inheritance, leafy alleys tunneled through the second-growth forests of New England and murmuring eternally with the purling song of some hidden brook. How could one dwell on the future in the midst of a blessed present?

But most distracting of all were two emotions that frequently assailed him, utterly divergent in their sources: the empty feeling in the hand that once had held the soft little fingers of Janice through many a jaunt; and the poignant aching that came to his heart on those occasions when from some rise his gaze fell on beckoning trees on the edge of vision silhouetted against an evening sky. The sadness that he felt at memories of Janice was simply explained. It was the longing we all feel for some dear heart to share a thing of beauty. He did not know why trees beckoning on a far horizon

filled his heart with yearning and brought a lump to his throat for youth no less than old age answers blindly the call of beyond.

Sleeping where night found him, living on the country, supplementing his slender purse by half a day's work now and then, John waxed strong and lost track of time until one morning a mere impulse of haste made him jump a freight on a little railway that wandered absent-mindedly down a valley. He made friends with the crew who seemed ready to welcome any company, but when the line came to a sudden end in a small manufacturing town, he felt strangely depressed.

He had started out that morning in the very best of spirits and now he realized that they had been sinking for hours. As he puzzled over the reason he remembered a saying of one of his first teachers, "No man can look up and think of vile things." John smiled suddenly. "I have been traveling down a valley," he said to himself. "I don't believe a man can travel down a valley without a sinking of the heart."

He turned his face and his steps toward the hills. All afternoon he climbed till the slanting rays of the setting sun, falling in a long shaft of light between two forested peaks, led his eyes to a far sheet of shimmering water. He caught his breath with a jerk, half gasp, half sigh. Is there anything more beautiful, he wondered, than blue water amid crowding wooded hills? He climbed the bank at the roadside, settled comfortably against the slanting trunk of a tree, and fastened his eyes on that distant mirror of the quiet heavens. It stilled him, made him drowsy, put him to sleep.

CHAPTER XIII

BY noon of the next day John reached the lake, or, at least, thought he had reached it. For a long time the road skirted just within glimpses of the water, winding along, damp and odorous beneath overhanging trees, as though it were looking in vain for a way down to the shore. Through little vistas that tunneled through the foliage the lake would occasionally flash a quick look, as suddenly veiled again.

John grew impatient. It seemed to him that the lake was deliberately flirting with the road, and he was just about to plunge his way down through the scrub when the road made a sudden gesture to the right, as though it said, "There you are," and then bent back and resumed its wandering way. But John followed no longer; he stood still and gazed down a hall in the woods that was like the nave of a church. Straight, towering pines held up a roof so thick that no underbrush grew beneath it. From where he stood, to the very edge of the water and the sunlight, stretched a glimmering brown carpet of pine needles.

John started to run down the slope and immediately regretted it. His feet could find no purchase on the slippery floor, and rather than slide into mud, sharp rocks, and water, he deliberately sat down with a terrific bump and, digging in his heels, came to a slithering stop. He laughed aloud at himself, only to feel

rebuked by the dignified silence that answered him. There was not even an echo.

For a moment he sat still and looked around. Scattered among the pines were gray-old wooden benches and tables; just before him, as though standing on stilts in the water, was a ramshackle boathouse, and to one side of that half a dozen small boats rode heavily at anchor, weighted down by unbailed bilge water. Evidently an old picnic ground, such as a countryside is wont to use but once a year to celebrate the glorious Fourth.

The door of the boathouse was ajar. John made his way in along a rotten plank and found that half of the single room was floored. Above the flooring were shelves piled with neglected gear and a rack with oars. The cool shadows of the place made him realize that he himself was extremely hot and dusty. He took off his clothes and slipped into the water.

It was like dropping into an ice-cooler. With chattering teeth he swam quickly out into the sun. Soon the feeling of chill left him; he felt the blood beginning to sing in his veins. The water swirled around his limbs with a caress that carried recollection back and back to before Melbourne, Durban, Captain Ike, and even Europe, back to naked boyhood's swimming-hole. He laughed and swallowed some of the cold lake water, dog-paddled, pretended he was drowning, and proved in various ways that he was young, young!

With that cry still ringing in his heart he turned to swim back to the boathouse. As he drew near he was conscious that a change had come to the landscape.

The quiet, softly accentuated by faintly lapping water, the deep nave of the pines, the sharp outlines of sunshine and shadow, were still there, but no longer spread flat upon the world. Now they were drawn in upon a single point of light, upon the slim white figure of a girl who, standing anywhere, would become the center of a picture.

John wondered if he had been noticed. He swam stealthily under the boathouse and while still in the water, softly closed the door. Then he climbed to the half floor and dressed as rapidly as his wet skin and the semi-darkness would let him. He opened the door slowly and stepped out. The whole world was silent, flat, empty.

Like one who wakes from a fascinating dream to find his mind an impotent blank, John felt cheated. He hurried ashore and up through the pines, peering right and left in vain. There was no telltale swaying of bushes, no track of small feet on the smooth carpet of pine needles. In a semi-clearing he saw the pale green of the leaves of berry bushes and, as he drew nearer, he caught the glint of the sun on the fruit itself. He felt suddenly hungry and for an hour ate blackberries by the handful, his thoughts meantime running on the girl.

Had he really seen her? What would he have done if she had stayed? Spoken to her and frightened her out of her wits? For the third time that day he laughed at himself and then went back to the boathouse and started to put it in order.

He sorted out the tangled gear, arranged the oars in pairs, found a fishing line that was sound in parts and

two rusty hooks. He also unearthed a strip of carpet and three moldy cushions that were as distantly allied to some lake idyl as the stale smell of tobacco to a virgin cigar. He carried them out and laid them in the sun to air, then he drew in one of the boats, bailed it out, and, having supplied himself with half a dozen grubs and worms, went fishing.

By late afternoon he had caught three small perch and an unwary black bass and was pulling slowly for the boathouse, trying vainly to remember what Robinson Crusoe had done for salt. As the boat ran its nose on the shelving shore a voice remarked grimly, "Quarter of a dollar, please."

John turned with a start and beheld a short figure of large girth at the waist, a girth that diminished rapidly up and down, so that the stranger gave the impression of an egg stood on end. John's first impulse was to jump ashore, push it over, and see it roll, but something in the set of the grim face made him hesitate. However, he was still smiling at his fancy when he stepped off the boat, his four fish strung on a bit of string.

"Don't you think you need a boatman?" he asked pleasantly.

"Don't need nothin'," snapped the stranger, "only a quarter of a dollar."

"Lucky man," said John, digging out a quarter, to the stranger's visible surprise, and handing it over.

"Did n't think you had it on ye," said the barrel-like man, a little sheepishly.

"Who are you, anyway," asked John, "and how do I know those boats are yours?"

"I'm Farmer Tupper," said the stranger, "an' them's my boats, all right. If ye don't credit it take back your money an' I'll hev ye 'rested. Long time now sence I've hed a chance to 'rest anybody."

"No, thanks," said John, smiling. "Would you like some of my fish?"

"Naw," said Mr. Tupper. "Don't eat 'em."

"I'm sorry," said John, "because I was going to ask you for some salt. I've got to get some salt!"

"Waal, why don't you buy some? You got legs an' there's the road."

John shook his head. "No money now," he said.

"You on the bum?" asked the farmer.

John nodded. "And besides," he said, "I think I'll stay here for a while and put your boats in shape. If you'll take a look into your dirty old boathouse perhaps you'll feel like giving me back that quarter."

"No money in the boats now," said the farmer, gloomily. "You c'n play with 'em if you like. Come on up to the house. I'll give ye some salt."

Together they trudged up through the pines and along the dusty road that John had refused to follow farther, until they came to a lane that led to the right and up to a large farmhouse squatted upon the top of a mounded hill. The house overlooked the part of the lake where John had been fishing. The farmer led the way to the kitchen door and called out to some one within, "Elizabeth, give this young feller a handful o' salt."

With a jerk of his head for farewell he trudged off in the direction of a big barn. John stood and waited,

feeling a slight thrill of anticipation. Would a slim figure in white answer to the name of Elizabeth? A large comely woman, aproned and wearing glasses, appeared behind the screen door and stared at him. In her left hand she carried a bit of a newspaper with a small heap of salt on it. She opened the door half a foot and held out the salt. "Goin' to catch birdies?" she asked solemnly.

John looked puzzled and dazed for a moment, then he laughed suddenly. A small smile, too small for her broad face, lit up the features of the woman, but quickly passed, leaving her as solemn as before. "No," said John. "Fish. I've caught some, now I want to cook them."

"You hungry?" asked the woman.

"Always!" said John with a grin.

"You wait," said the woman and disappeared. A moment later she came back and handed out to him a half loaf of homemade bread and a small tin pail of milk. "You bring back the pail."

With the salt wrapped up and stuck in his pocket, the bread tucked under one arm, and the pail dangling from his finger, John tipped his hat and turned to saunter down the hill. He looked about him as he went and saw that he was on no dilapidated farm. The barn, the house, and the fields were as sleek as a well-groomed horse, and in a hollow gleamed long beds of carefully tended garden truck.

When he got back to the boathouse it took him well into the twilight to clean his fish, broil them, and eat them, accompanied by a large slice of the homemade

bread and a long draft from the fresh milk in the pail. Feeling absurdly content after the simple fare he sat and smoked his pipe till he felt drowsy; then he made a bed in the boathouse of the strip of carpet and the cushions, and without remembering that he had lain down awoke to the surprising fact of an entirely new morning sun shining through the cracks in the wall in long dusty bars of gold.

He sprang up with a vague sense of a duty to be done, but just at first he could not remember what it was. Then his eyes fell on the pail of milk which he had hung in the water to keep cool. That was it; he must return the pail. In great haste he picked some berries, crushed them between two slices of bread, and washed the sandwich down with what was left of the milk. Then he scalded the pail with boiling water and washed it with sand and ashes till it shone. Propping it, bottom half up between two stones, he took a razor and a bit of soap from his pocket and had his first shave in three days, after which he stripped and bathed.

Feeling like a new man but still hungry, he walked up to the farmhouse. Just as he was approaching the kitchen door Farmer Tupper's voice hailed him from the barnyard. "Hi, you! Come here!"

He put down the pail and hurried to where the tubby farmer was sitting on the top rail of the yard fence, glaring at a young Jersey cow that glared back and made jerky motions with her horns, while she plowed up the dung in the yard with her forefeet. Behind her staggered an absurd, newborn calf on stilt-like, knock-kneed legs.

"Does she think she's a bull?" asked John.

"Naw," said the farmer. "She thinks she's the first cow that ever had a calf. I want you should hold her while I strip the milk from her."

"Thanks," said John, turning pale. "Who's going to bell the cat?"

"What?" said Farmer Tupper.

"Who's going to put the halter on her?" explained John.

"Halter!" said the farmer, spitting at a passing bumble-bee and hitting it. "It ain't a mule; it's a cow an' a small cow at that. I ain't goin' to frighten the life out o' her with ropes and things. Don't ye know how to hold a cow?"

"No," said John, promptly.

"Well, I'll show ye!" said Farmer Tupper with sudden decision, and let his bulk down so lightly and stepped so mincingly across the yard that John thought to see him bounce into the air at any moment and stay suspended, floating like a balloon.

The farmer approached the cow gently with soothing words and then suddenly seized her horns, bumped up against her shoulder, and twisted her neck around his middle, all with astounding celerity. "There you are!" he puffed. "Come on, unless you want to do the milkin'."

John drew near slowly.

"She won't bite ye," said the farmer, testily. "Hold her jest so with her neck twisted around your middle."

John took hold with a mighty grip and slipped into

the farmer's place. Soon he found to his vast relief that as long as he kept that twist in the cow's neck the slightest pressure was enough to control her. Before he knew it Farmer Tupper had stripped the udder and was making for the fence.

"Better run when you let go of her," he remarked over his shoulder.

CHAPTER XIV

JOHN cleared the fence just before the cow reached it and, a little breathless, joined Mr. Tupper, who was walking toward the house.

"Puffin', are ye?" said the farmer. "That's the worst o' you city fellers. Ye jest give one look at work and it takes your breath away."

John had expected praise and the arraignment he got instead, roused his ire. "You don't know what you're talking about," he said. "All the statistics are against you. Any army drill sergeant can tell you that a bunch of city clerks will make fresh farm hands look like mush when it comes to endurance. I'll — I'll bet you a week's keep I can put it all over any farm hand you've got."

Mr. Tupper gave him a side-glance. "I'll bet ye can't," he remarked grimly.

Elizabeth, or Mrs. Tupper, as John now learned her to be, had picked up the tin pail which he had laid on the kitchen step when he was called away to hold the cow. As he and the farmer came up she was smelling its inside with evident approval. "You c'n have some more milk whenever you like, young feller," she said.

"He don't want his suckin' bottle to-day," remarked Mr. Tupper. "He's a farm hand."

He led John over the brow of the hill to a field where three men were just starting to get in the first of the

hay crop and put him to raking up after the wagon. John took off his coat and fell to with a will, while Mr. Tupper, chewing on a straw, loitered from one worker to another and with a wink and a nod of his head remarked in a tone of great admiration, "Young city feller!"

Raking up after the wagon is commonly called a boy's job. Like many another task it's a boy's job because nobody but a slave under the whip can be made to stick to it. It has but one advantage over the varied labors of forking up the hay mows, packing the wagon, and clucking "Gee-up" to the team, and that is its eventual automatism.

For the first half hour John enjoyed the work and the friendly jibes of his co-laborers; at the end of the next half hour he began listening intently for the dinner bell. He stole a quick glance at the cheap watch he carried, thought it had stopped, found it had n't, and decided it lied. Eight o'clock! and the sun was high and blazing as it is supposed to do only in the most realistic tales of the tropics!

He caught a smile on the face of one of the farm hands, saw a nodded signal go the rounds, and five minutes later realized that he was being systematically speeded up to his downfall. He gritted his teeth and set to work again. Two could play at that game. Within the hour he had the satisfaction of shouting, "Move up, will you? Or tell me how to rake ahead of the wagon!"

His voice was thick from dust, his eyes ached in their sockets, and the band of his hat was a rim of fire, but

it was like a tonic to hear a grunt from Farmer Tupper in the rear. "The young feller's right," he remarked. "Even a hearse oughter keep ahead of the funeral."

The men laughed in nervous cackles, but their dry lips closed quickly and their faces grew set. Nobody, not even Mr. Tupper, who rarely took a hand and had been twice to the barley-water pail to everybody else's once, looked as if he thought a joke was on.

John's first jibe was his last. When he had shouted it his whole body was on the rack, the rake handle had long since burst his blisters and was eating its way into the raw flesh of his hands, and his head was throbbing mercilessly under the blows of his pulse. Then, quite suddenly, he passed the bourne of sensation. His will fell asleep but he worked on in a trance, a nightmare of labor that just went on and on under the impetus of three hours of the same monotonous motion.

At long last the dinner bell clanged in the distance; the noon hour had come. The men did not immediately throw down their forks. They held to them for a moment, making spasmodic movements in a desperate effort to seem unconcerned. Then they drove them all into a single mow, like arms stacked on the field of battle. John, his limbs trembling as with the ague, laid his rake beside the forks. One of the men on the wagon reached down to grasp the reins. The horses, feeling his movement, started for the barn. The wain creaked under the heaviest and hardest packed load it had ever carried.

"Come along up to dinner," said Mr. Tupper to John. "We don't start agin fer an hour."

With a desperate effort John smiled and said, "No, thanks. I hardly feel hungry yet." Trying to keep his legs from staggering, he made for the fence and the road. He gave a gasp of relief when at last he plunged into the cool shadow of the pines and snatched off his hat. To his dismay the circle of fire was still there, eating into his temples. Twice he felt his head to make sure the band of the hat had not come out and stuck to it. He stumbled into the boathouse and fell full length on his strip of carpet. For half an hour he was deathly sick.

When he was well enough to think he lay on his back and murmured at intervals, "Beaten, by jiminy! beaten to a frazzle!"

He was still awake, demanding of the gods if sleep would ever again come to his burning eyeballs, when a vision in white appeared in the doorway. He stared at it, wondering if this was some new element of torture. Then it spoke in a voice that was a little breathless but musical even in its gasps. "They sent me down to — to tell you that you need n't come back this afternoon. The men are done up. They all seem to — to have the — the *colic*."

John laughed hoarsely, a laugh that sounded like the opening of a rusty gate. The girl turned away, paused, and came back into the frame of light. "It's so — so dark in there I can't be sure but I *think* you're fishing. I'll — I'll tell them."

She was gone. John raised himself on one elbow and craned his neck. He caught two glimpses of her, swaying swiftly up through the pines toward the road.

Presently, with a smile twitching lazily at his lips, he went to sleep.

Half an hour before sunset Mr. Tupper appeared in person to verify report. True enough, he found John fishing.

“What you been doin’ all afternoon?” he asked suspiciously.

“Oh,” said John, “a lot of things. I’ve had a swim and a nap and fished — Just killing time.” Then, with much concern in his voice, he asked, “Are the men feeling better, Mr. Tupper?”

The farmer grunted noncommittally. “Hottest day we’ve had in years,” he grumbled, and added gloomily, “Reckon I got to feed ye for a week.”

John nodded. “Do you want to back any farm hand to eat more than I can?” he asked cheerfully.

“No,” said Mr. Tupper, “an’ unless you’re fonder’n I am o’ cold vittles you’ll come up to the house pretty quick.”

He turned and started up the slope. John moored his boat and followed. He was longing to ask about the vision in white but refrained. The call of the supper bell met them when they were half way up the hill and by the time they reached the kitchen door Mrs. Tupper was saying the things that housewives invariably say when man is two minutes late to a meal. “I declare, them biscuits is nigh burnt to a cinder and —”

John entered the room alone. His eyes, traveling rapidly around, saw that two tables were set, one for a possible six guests and the other for a possible four. The five farm hands were gathered around the larger

table and John noticed that Mrs. Tupper was watching him a little nervously. With scarcely any hesitation he took the one remaining chair at the big table and grinned genially back at the sheepish grins with which the three men who had been at the haying welcomed him.

Mr. Tupper came in, moist and smelling of soap, and beside him walked John's vision, a girl, fresh and young and lissome but not quite as slim as he had dreamed her to be. The two sat down at the smaller table, where Mrs. Tupper joined them as soon as she had finished piling food hot and food cold in enormous quantities before the men and her husband.

As on John's previous first meals in farmhouses, silence — conversational silence — reigned unbroken until he ventured a remark that echoed back on itself from the bare walls of the kitchen. No one seemed surprised but nobody paid any heed. John opened his mouth again and closed it. He knew that no frontal attack can weld a split company. For a time he ate as silent as the rest, his mind busy with trying to place the girl.

She apparently belonged with her surroundings and she obviously did n't. She was quite at home but there was an air about her that made her seem foreign ; something in the way she was dressed, in the way she ate, in the way, he remembered, that she talked. John stole several glances at her and asked himself if she were pretty. He decided that she was not and then she smiled at nothing in particular and he decided that she was. "Summer boarder," he was saying to himself,

when one of the farm hands spoke to his neighbor in a solemn, almost inaudible, mumble.

So that was the etiquette, thought John, and began mumbling solemnly to the man next to him. He was an old man. At first, John's attentions made him nervous, so nervous that he stopped filling his mouth chock full at every bite, for when people are nervous they breathe so hard that the normal channel for getting wind into the lungs falls below capacity. But soon the old man's attention was arrested, then seized. He forgot to be nervous; he almost forgot to eat. Presently he spluttered, stomped his feet, and suddenly burst into a loud guffaw. He got up from the table and left the room, his gray head wobbling from side to side. John saw a sort of pained curiosity dawn in the faces about him. Mrs. Tupper especially looked as though she felt she had missed something.

"Funny old man," he said gravely to the company in general. "Does he often act like that?"

One by one, as they finished, the farm hands got up and left the room. From somewhere outside floated back a murmuring voice and a subsequent guffaw for each new arrival. At last John sat alone at his table. He was almost bursting with food but he continued to eat steadily, his eyes fixed on his plate. He felt that he was being watched.

Farmer Tupper had been picking his teeth for some time. He removed the toothpick to say to his wife, "Elizabeth, I owe this young feller a week's keep. Better get in an extry barrel o' flour to-morrer an' we'll hev to cut the skimmed milk off from the pigs for a

while. They c'n grub instead in the old orchard —"

"Ain't you 'shamed! Mr. Tupper," interrupted Elizabeth. "Jest because you 'n' your help be too puny to eat solid enough to stand up to more 'n half a day's work at a time you object to seein' a man staunchin' his appetite. Go long outa here an' let him eat in peace."

"Call me in the mornin' early," remarked Mr. Tupper over his shoulder as he left the room, "I 'd like to see him finish."

As the screen door slapped shut behind him, John laid down his knife and the thickly buttered half of the last hot biscuit. His twinkling eyes met the twinkling eyes of Mrs. Tupper. They were friends.

"What was it you was tellin' old Ben to make him bust out like that?" she asked.

John looked at her and grinned. "If it was something I could tell you, he would n't have laughed, would he?"

The twinkle left Mrs. Tupper's eyes. "Well," she said severely, "all I c'n say is that sence you can't behave with old hands like Ben you 'll hev to eat after this with me 'n' Mr. Tupper."

"And —?" said John brazenly, looking straight at the girl.

She flashed a look at him, turned pink to the tips of her ears, and said, a little gaspingly, "I 'm — I 'm Joan. Joan Tupper."

CHAPTER XV

JOHN knew better than to hang around the women folk. He went out and joined the men for a while, then, lighting a fresh pipe, said good night and started down the hill. As he passed the front porch he heard the rhythmic squeak of a rocking chair and out of the corner of his eye caught a blur of white.

“Good night,” he called, “—Joan.”

“G-good night,” answered the girl.

It was a glorious evening. The afterglow of day still clung to the sky in a wide-flung arch of dappled pink as though it were striving to brand night itself with the blush of dawn. John felt as though he were walking on air; he wanted to shout but the vast stillness of the high-roofed world restrained him, almost rebuked him for the impulse. In the midst of the nave of pines he sat down and for an hour watched day die from the heavens and the lake.

The next morning he slept late and by the time he had washed his clothes and bathed while they dried, the farmhouse breakfast hour was far past. He caught a single fish, broiled it, and was sucking the last bone dry when a feeling came over him that he was being watched. He looked up to see Joan standing among the pines, swinging an empty pail.

“Hello!” he cried. “Good morning!”

"Good morning," she called in answer, starting forward with the swift, swaying motion that seemed to him, like her talk, a bit gaspy. "Why — why did n't you come to breakfast?"

"Sleeping," said John.

The girl nodded gravely. "Father said it was either that or you were putting twenty miles between you and the memory of work."

John laughed. "Did you come down for a bucket of water?"

"No," said the girl. "Berries."

"That's a big pail," said John. "I'll help you fill it if you'll lend it to me first."

"What for?" asked Joan.

"I'll show you," said John. He scoured the bottom of the pail with sand and ashes and washed it clean, then propped it up and with his back to the girl proceeded to shave.

She sat down on a rock and watched him, at first in silence, then, "I can see your face in the bottom of the pail. It's too funny. Now it looks like a toothache on one side. Now it looks like vinegar or — or choke-cherries. Now — now it looks as if you were *hurting* yourself. Oh, don't, *don't* open your mouth like that. It's — it's the way old Ben used to play idiot and — and it *frightens* me!"

John stopped shaving, laid his razor down carefully, and picked up the pail. "Here you are," he said, turning to hold it out to the girl. "Please run along and play — out of sight."

Joan did not move. She was sitting with her knees

hugged in her arms. "Go on and finish," she said calmly. "I won't — any more. I was just doing it because it's su-supposed to be such a — a splendid test. I've never had a chance before."

John grinned. "Well," he said, resuming operations, "you certainly got a rise. Why don't you try it on your old man sometime?"

"Father," said Joan, with faint emphasis, "goes ten miles for a shave — every Saturday afternoon. Did n't you shave yesterday?"

"Um — h'm," said John.

"I forgot," said Joan. "I must n't talk, not even to ask you if you're nearly finished."

"Awmst," said John, good-naturedly.

A moment later he rinsed the razor, wiped it on a leaf, and dried it on his trousers. Then he put it away in the boathouse with what was left of his soap, washed his face free of suds, and got his hat.

"Now for the berries," he said as he came out again.

They walked side by side to the tangled clearing where the berries grew thickest and for half an hour scarcely spoke a word. These periods of silence do not come to the exceptionally young through content, or complete understanding, nor are they periods of mental rest. As a matter of fact, they are a species of breathless conversation without words, silent talk punctuated with side-glances, blushes, wandering smiles, an occasional half sigh and ending, in this case, with a sudden audible, "Ouch!"

"Oh, what's the matter?" cried John, setting down the pail and pushing an intervening bramble aside.

"I — I've pricked my finger," said Joan, holding out her hand and lifting moist eyes to John's face which was absurdly full of a really solemn concern.

"You poor child," he said, taking her hand in his own and staring at the tiny drop of oozing blood.

His own hand trembled. He felt vaguely that he was standing at an emotional verge, then, suddenly, he forgot that he had been feeling very, very young. The girl and her smooth little hand and the tiny drop of blood became a man-sized problem. What place had this delicate and grammatical combination in a cosmos of barnyard, farmhouse, farm hands, and the coarse fiber of the major Tupperts?

Still holding her hand, he picked up the pail, led her out into the shade of the pines, and made her sit down on a great flat stone near the lake. Then he took her handkerchief, soaked it in water, and bathed away the little drop of blood.

"Thank you," said Joan. "I was tired of picking berries. Were n't you?"

John stared at her, a puzzled look in his face, wondering if she meant him to laugh, but she stared back quite gravely.

"Were n't you?" she repeated.

John nodded his head. "I suppose I was," he said, "only I had n't time to realize it. I was so busy." Then he smiled. "That sounds funny, does n't it? Well, I *felt* busy, anyhow!"

"So did I," said Joan, and they both laughed.

From a spring near by John brought a bunch of cool watercresses and spread it over the berries. Joan had

not pricked herself until the pail was nearly full. Then he threw aside his coat and hat and stretched himself full length beside her. "Now," he said, "tell me what I want to know. Not why you are as sweet and flushed as a briar rose but where you learned to talk, walk, and keep your hands so small and smooth and —"

"And clean?" asked Joan, holding out fingers pink-tipped and pink-nailed but splotted with blackberry stains.

"Yes," said John, his eyes blind to the stains.

"You have n't been around very much, have you?" asked Joan.

"Well, not just around here," said John, smiling to himself with sudden thoughts of the wide world.

"No," said the girl, "because if you had you would n't think there was anything extraordinary about me. Father and mother are like lots of old folks. They love me. I've been away to school. Some day I'm to go to college."

John wondered if schools could really turn out Joans, not singly by a fluke but in the gross. He realized that though women had long been in his life he had never yet had occasion to study a sizable American girl. It seemed to him that the gods had brought an extraordinarily fine specimen to his hand. Here was Joan, probably a native child in every fiber of her body, planted in that small section of New England which had not yet been invaded by the alien element from the north nor encroached upon by the swarming immigrant hordes that even at that date had transformed the operative world of the coast towns. She was evolution in a

line unbroken by a graft. He gazed up at her until the pink in her cheeks deepened and then, reproving himself for doing anything to make her shy under the microscope, turned the talk on himself.

"Don't you want to ask about me?"

"Why?" said Joan.

"Well, I'm rather out of the way for a tramp — at least, I thought I was."

"But you're not a tramp," said Joan, promptly. "Did you really think you were mysterious? The first time mother laid eyes on you she said, 'There's another o' them college boys that thinks he's the first that ever walked cross-lots from Poughkeepsie to Danbury.'"

John laughed aloud. "And I thought your mother had taken a liking to me!"

"She has," said Joan. "She likes even tramps. Mother likes almost everybody."

"Thanks," said John. Then his thoughts went back to Joan and school and from there to girls' schools in general.

"I went to a girls' school once for dinner," he said.

"You?" cried Joan, her eyes dancing. "How — how did it end?"

"I was only eight years old," said John, "but I've never forgotten it. My mother took me. It's the only time I really remember my mother. I can see the little hat she wore, her funny sleeves, and her face. She was looking very young that day because at the school there was an old lady that kept calling her 'Molly' and saying, 'So this is really your son, Molly, your

own boy!’ And mother kept saying, yes, she was sure of it.

“Then some of the girls came and took me away to fuss over me. They were n’t at all excited over mother. It was a very old school and old girls came back to visit often, but I remember they thought mother must be somebody very important because there was a fine smell of something roasting and it was n’t the regular day for roast beef. They got quite excited over that and one girl clapped her hands, grabbed me, kissed me and said, ‘Oh, goodie!’

“Then, just as it was time for the dinner bell to ring, there was a terrible cry from the kitchen and chattering voices and sobs and slamming doors and an awful hubbub all through the big house. A very sad thing had happened. While the cook was out getting firewood Reginald had crawled into the oven and when she came back she had slammed the door without noticing him. The oven had warmed up slowly and Reginald had peacefully been done to a turn. Reginald was the school cat.”

“Oh!” cried Joan, her eyes suddenly wide, “how — how awful!”

“Yes,” said John, “it was a terrible thing to happen. The girl that had kissed me and said ‘goodie’ broke down and sobbed out that she could never forgive herself for thinking Reginald was roast beef and that she’d never eat roast beef again. Everybody said they could n’t think of eating *anything* and mother led me away to catch an earlier train. All the way to the station she was saying, ‘Oh, oh, we must n’t laugh, John,

we simply must n't. It's so sa-sad.' But she kept sort of spluttering for a long time. I did n't have to try not to laugh. I was mighty hungry."

Joan sprang to her feet. "Just like a horrid boy!" she cried. She turned from him with an impatient gesture and he saw her shoulders trembling. "You have told me a horrible story. I — I don't *like* you!"

Brushing the tears from her eyes with the back of her hand she started swiftly up through the pines. John snatched up the pail of berries and followed. When he caught up with her he said, "I'm awfully sorry, Joan. I'm sorry."

"Don't call me Joan," cried the girl. "You have no *right* to call me Joan. You — you did it last night."

"I know I did," said John. "It was very wrong. But Joan *is* your name after all and it's such a lovely name, I just could n't help saying it just to hear it. If you really don't want me to call you by your own name, I won't. I'll call you Miss Tupper. Only every time I do, I'll have to shout because it will make you seem so unfriendly and far away, Miss — Miss Tupper."

Joan gave him a swift side glance. "You're not — not making fun of me?"

"No," said John, fervently.

"Not making fun of my name?"

"Why, *no!*" cried John.

"Well, then," said the girl, "don't call me Joan too loud."

CHAPTER XVI

“**W**HAT are you goin’ to do this afternoon, young feller?” asked Mr. Tupper when the mid-day meal was over.

“I don’t know,” said John. “Something to keep my appetite down, out of fairness to you. I expect I’ll go fishing.”

“I think I’ll go too,” said Joan.

John’s mind gave a hitch and paused, as one’s mind does when it has reason to expect a clash. But no clash came. Mrs. Tupper did n’t say, “Why, Joan!” the farm help scarcely noticed, and all Mr. Tupper said was, “Elizabeth, better give him the alarm clock an’ set it fer half an hour to supper time.”

That was a long lazy afternoon but John felt that if he was n’t learning something every minute, he was at least trying to. He thought he was striving to make out Joan but in reality he was only playing his old unconscious game of making out himself, trying to fit himself squarely in a round hole. Joan was something new in his experience. She seemed foreign even to the books he had read. He stared at her frankly and watched her furtively, but she seemed to hold out no clue to herself. She was so even, so complete, that she offered no hand hold, and John likened himself to

a small boy with a hickory nut and no stone in sight to break it with. She puzzled him.

"You've been to school a lot, haven't you?" he asked.

"Almost always," said Joan.

"Well, then," said John, "define a puzzle."

"A puzzle?" said the girl, puckering her brow.

"Yes," said John, "put a puzzle into words."

The girl shook her head lazily. "This is vacation time. Mother doesn't allow me to work in summer."

"Well, that's something learned," said John. "There is n't much she doesn't allow you, is there?"

The girl stared at him. "What — what do you mean?" she asked.

Something in the innocence of her face reproached him. He felt as though he had struck her. "Nothing, nothing," he said hastily. "I'll define a puzzle for you myself. A puzzle is something that aggravates and fascinates at the same time. It must do both or it is n't a puzzle."

"I wonder why you keep thinking I'm a puzzle," said Joan.

"But I didn't say *you* were a puzzle," protested John.

"Didn't you?" asked Joan. She trailed her hand in the water and then held it up and watched the drops slip off her fingers. "Drops of water are beautiful," she said drowsily. "I — I always wish I could put them on a chain — a very thin chain."

With his strip of carpet and the cushions John had made a couch for her in the stern of the boat. They

were trolling and as he rowed with quiet slow strokes of the light oars he looked down on her. She was very much in the picture. As on the first day he had seen her, she *was* the picture. The rippling water, the shadows on the lake, the swaying boat, the dark land, and the enfolding sky seemed to center upon her small person.

To-day, as always, she was dressed in white and her head and arms were bare. He liked the way her brown hair was fixed, parted with a swirl just to the left of center and gathered in a thick roll at the back of her neck. It seemed more than anything else to proclaim her age, just halfway between child- and womanhood. In her lap lay an old Leghorn hat, banded with a swath of white tulle. With one hand she folded its broad brim back and forth while her gray eyes, fixed intently on the shining drops of water, gradually dimmed.

Suddenly, with the cuddling motion of a child, she turned half on her side, drew her hands together under her chin, and went to sleep.

John rowed on, more softly than ever. He guided the boat through a sea of lily-pads and blooms into the shade of overhanging trees. With one gunwale pressed against the bank he drove the blade of an oar into the mud on the further side and imprisoned the boat. Then he lit his pipe and sat quite still, his eyes fixed on the sleeping girl. He could see her red lips parting faintly to each breath. Her folded hands and her arms, lying across her bosom, rose and fell steadily but very softly, and once in a while her free leg would give the slightest twitch as though it alone remained awake and had half

a mind to protest at her too intimate exposure. All around, the white water lilies lifted erect petals as though they were stretching their necks to look upon her too.

Presently John turned his eyes away, and then his whole body pivoted until he sat with his back to the girl. A flush was in his olive cheeks. Feeling it there, he grew angry and blew great puffs from his pipe as though he strove to bury himself in a fog of smoke. His blood raced in his veins and time kept step so that almost before he knew it long shadows were drawing across the lake. He had filled and refilled his pipe automatically till now it was so hot he could scarcely hold it. He thrust it in his pocket and swung around, rocking the boat violently.

The girl awoke with a start. Her eyelids fluttered, closed, then fluttered wide, and she laughed. "Why," she gasped. "I've been asleep."

John nodded, took in the lines, and got the boat under way. With short strong strokes he drove it out beyond the point of land that had sheltered them. Suddenly a view opened to his eyes that he had never seen before. The glimmering water stretched away and away as far as the eye could reach.

John stopped rowing. "Well, I'll be jiggered," he said. "Look at that!"

The girl turned and glanced over her shoulder. "At what? What do you see?"

"Water!" said John. "D'you know, I thought this lake of yours was a fish pond, a sort of a long jump for a grasshopper."

"Oh, no," said the girl. "It's quite big."

"How big?"

"Miles."

John sighed contentedly. "I'm happy," he said.

"Why?" asked the girl.

"Because I've got something to do. I'm going to make a sail and step a mast in this boat and *then*—" He waved his hand at the reach of water.

"Oh," cried the girl, clapping her hands, "that'll be fine, just *fine*! When — when can we go? I've never been once in a sailboat!"

"Have n't you?" said John, pityingly. "Well, don't get excited yet. It'll take days and days. I've got to get canvas and tools and ropes and things."

The girl looked disappointed, then her face brightened. "Would a tarpaulin do? One of the big ones they use on the hay?"

"It certainly would," said John, "but —"

"But what?"

"Who's going to knock your father on the head and take it?"

"I am," said Joan, promptly. "I'll get everything; the canvas and the old flag pole we never use and all the tools in the woodshed. Only, you must n't say a word. I'll get something else, too. I'll get credit for making you work for your keep."

The next morning John awoke to the rattle of a spring wagon backing down to his front door. He peeped out and beheld the egg-like Mr. Tupper unloading a long spar, a huge bundle of canvas and cords, and a tool chest.

He slipped on his coat and stepped out. "I appreciate this, Mr. Tupper," he said. "Never thought you 'd come down to drive me up to breakfast."

Mr. Tupper glared at him and then made a surprisingly quick ascent to the driver's seat. Before John knew what he was up to he had laid whip to the horses. They snorted and plunged into a gallop.

John sprang forward, clutched the fast-receding tailboard with one hand, and hung on for dear life. He was swept off his feet, his heels slithered and bounced over the pine-needle floor, but he would not let go. Mr. Tupper gave the horses another clip to keep them going, calmly climbed over the seat, and unhooked the tailboard. Great was John's fall.

He got up, bruised and shaken, and dusted off his clothes. For a moment he hesitated, then, smiling grimly at the way he had been had, he walked slowly after the disappearing wagon. Just around the bend of the road he came upon it, waiting for him. As he silently climbed aboard Mr. Tupper remarked, "You be careful, young feller, how you josh a fat man. Fat men is terrible sudden sometimes."

"You're a wonder," said John, grinning. "But I don't believe yet you can really jump: I think you bounce."

At breakfast Joan ate little and watched each mouthful that John took as though she were calculating how long it would take him to swallow it. The moment he finished she sprang to her feet and said, "Come on. You *do* eat a lot."

John paused long enough to fill his pipe and then

followed her toward the lake. When they arrived at the boathouse she said, "Now look everything over. Is there anything you need that is n't here, because if there is I'm going back to get it."

"No," said John. "Nothing missing." He took off his coat, laid aside his pipe, and went to work. Two days before he had looked upon Mr. Tupper as a fully developed slave driver, but before he had labored an hour under Joan's supervision he realized that, beside her, Mr. Tupper was a mere infant in arms. It was not that Joan was noisily urgent; quite the contrary. She sat unnaturally still but her stillness was tense. It was her face and her expression that did the driving. Her eyes followed quickly every movement he made and her expression changed with the rapidity of a kaleidoscope from approval to scorn and from censure to open exultation. When he paused only to stretch his aching back, her eyes clouded; and once, when he dared to reach out a tentative hand toward his pipe, they blazed in such consternation that he suddenly changed his mind and scratched his head instead, as though that were all he had started out to do.

His sigh of relief when a far-away clang warned them of the dinner hour was so deep that it burst a button from his shirt. He could not enjoy his dinner because he was too hot and tired to eat and Joan watched him just as she had done at breakfast. When they got back to the boathouse he walked inside and closed the door after him.

"Wha — what are you doing?" called Joan.

"Going for a swim," called back John. He took his

plunge in the shelter of the house, dressed slowly and came out, his hair still dripping. He was feeling much better for the bathe, but one glance at Joan wiped the smile from his lips. She had been crying, she was still crying, the slow tears coursing down her tense face.

John sprang ashore. "Joan," he cried, all contrition. "Don't. Don't cry."

"You don't care," sobbed Joan. "I want to see the boat finished so much, I ache. My head *aches* with wishing, and you — you don't *care*."

John's face set grimly. "I'll show you," he said and flew at his tools. All afternoon he worked in a sort of dull frenzy but he did not let his haste disorganize him. He drove his brain first of all and his brain drove his hands, his straddled legs, and even his teeth, into action. By evening he had accomplished wonders and he and Joan were both too tired to talk as they walked to the house for supper. Just before they reached it he said, "Will you do me a favor?"

"What is it?" asked Joan.

"Promise me you won't come down to the boathouse till four o'clock to-morrow afternoon."

"Why?"

"Well," said John, smiling nervously, "I simply can't stand the pace. Promise or I'll —"

"I promise," said Joan, hastily, and then turned curious eyes on him. "You were going to say or you'd quit. Don't — don't even think of it."

At three o'clock the next afternoon John looked upon his completed labor and saw that it was good; no flimsy

contraption of lath and unbleached muslin but a rig clumsily strong in every brace and stay, strong enough to bury the little boat gunwale deep in half a breeze, or sail her to the bottom in a blow.

CHAPTER XVII

HE was enjoying a lazy pipe when a clear voice hailed him from up among the pines, "Is it four o'clock yet?"

"Two minutes to go," called John.

The girl came down the incline in swift, slithering rushes.

"Look out!" cried John in genuine alarm, springing to his feet. "You'll slip."

She tripped on a root and shot into his arms. Even as she freed herself she said breathlessly, "Is it really *finished*?"

He nodded and for a moment they stood side by side and stared at the sturdy craft that looked like a dilapidated, dappled rocking horse crying aloud for two gallons of paint.

"It's beautiful," said Joan, with a sigh of content. "I — I'm ready."

John started to pick her up to put her on board, but she sprang back with a shake of her head. She turned from him, slipped off her shoes and stockings, and waded out to the boat. He followed, helped her in, and then rowed quickly beyond the lea of the pine forest. When the breeze descended upon them in light puffs he hurried forward, let down the centerboard, ran up the big square sail, made taut the weather stays,

and with the sheet wrapped around one wrist worked his way back to the tiller. The breeze freshened. He took a turn over a thole-pin and drew the sheet tight. The sail filled, the boat heeled to the wind and, a moment later, rushing water was purling in a mounting wave from under her stern.

"Oh," gasped Joan. "Oh!" She was thrilled and frightened. She did n't know whether to laugh or cry. She looked at John's face and saw a light playing in his eyes she had never seen before. A puff of wind caught her big hat, tore it from her head, and soused it into the lake fifty feet ahead. Now she knew which she wanted to do. She threw her arms wide and laughed aloud.

John's face was set. "Get ready to pick up your hat," he said sharply; then he wore boat and the next moment suddenly luffed.

Joan stared down. There was her hat just within reach. She snatched it out of the water and even as she did so the boat sprang forward again. She could not know all the cunning of the touch that had brought the craft to that sudden pause in its headlong flight, but something told her that she need fear no more, that John was master of wind and wave, and of this live thing that he had made with his hands.

Almost before they knew it they were past the point that had sheltered them two days before, and in three long slants they put the narrows behind them and shot out on a new sea with a far horizon.

"Jiminy!" cried John. "Look at 'em."

Three immaculate little twenty-footers, that had

been beating their way toward the neck of water from which John's boat was rushing, were in the act of wearing as he spoke.

"Oh, are n't they *pretty*," said Joan. "They must be from the Lake Grand."

"From the what?" asked John.

"The Lake Grand Hotel, over there," said Joan with a wave of her hand. "Miles." A burst of laughter floated back to them from the boats ahead. Joan flushed and turned to John. "Why did n't you tell me you wanted paint — white paint? I would have hated to wait for it to dry but I could have waited if — if you'd *made* me — if you'd told me they'd laugh at us!"

"Paint's a fine thing," said John, "but it does n't help a boat when it comes to sailing. You just wait, wait ten minutes or half an hour, and you'll forget all about paint." He crowded the boat close into the wind and held her there. The breeze across the wide water grew in force with every foot they traveled. Soon there were whitecaps and spray. The boat's bows surged and lifted with a mighty swirl. A fleck of water slapped Joan across the face and soaked her arm.

"Oh, I'm getting wet!" she gasped and then laughed. Her blood was on fire. John saw it flaming in her cheeks. He smiled at her and then, holding the tiller between his knees, leaned over and lifted out two floorboards. He jammed their ends under a thwart so that they stuck far out over the weather gunwale. The boat heeled and shipped water.

"Here," cried John. "Lie on one of these."

"I — I'm frightened," said Joan.



JOAN

"No, you're not," said John, sharply. "Leave it to me. I'll tell you when to be frightened. Do as I tell you."

Joan crawled across and sat on one of the boards.

"Higher," said John. "Get your weight over the edge. Wait. I'll show you."

With the loose end of the sheet he took a turn on the tiller; then he slid out on the floorboard nearest him as far as he could get and still keep his foot firmly braced against the helm.

"I'm frightened. I *am* frightened," cried Joan. "I could never do that. You're not in the boat at all!"

Even while she spoke she slid herself up backwards inch by inch until John called out, "That's fine. See how close we are together. You see, I just had to have you up here with me so I could talk to you. Now take a long breath and look around."

Joan did as she was told. Beneath her bulged the slimy side of the little boat that seemed to be using its keel for a fin. At its bows rose a frothy rollicking comb, taking many a slap from the boat and slapping back once in a while with long iridescent plumes of spray. The close-drawn sail bulged out tremendously, cupped the breeze, and swept it back over her. The wind tore at her hair and loosened long strands that streamed out like silken pennants. The lee gunwale played a dangerous game of touch and go with the brimming waters of the lake and in the bottom of the boat the big Leghorn hat, soaking wet, occasionally flopped one side of its brim like a stranded fish at the last gasp.

"Oh!" cried Joan. "Oh!" and clapped her hands.

"Don't do that," said John. "Hold tight to the seat. This is n't a buckboard on four wheels."

"Why!" cried Joan, "where are those pretty boats?"

"You'll see in a minute," said John.

Even as he spoke they blanketed the nearest of the three yachts and shot past it. John's quick eye took in the reefed mainsail, the slack sheet, and the look of tamed consternation on the faces of the immaculate crew. It also caught a combination of surprise and indignation in the face of a single girl passenger, whose lips were open as though getting ready to tell her escorts what she thought of them.

John smiled and then said in a clear, carrying voice, "I do hope they've brought their supper with them."

"Oh," said Joan, laughing softly. "They heard you. I *saw* them hear you."

Then she turned her eyes on John. For a long time he had not looked at her and she wondered why; soon she saw the reason. Although sitting apparently still, he was exceedingly busy. His eyes shot glances here and there that were like flashes, but they kept to a steady round. His face was eager but tense, as though intent upon an infinite number of minute calculations based upon that round of glances. Coatless and bareheaded, with his shirt open at the throat, his right arm swelling under the strain of the sheet and his extended right foot playing firmly against the helm, his whole body braced and balanced to a nicety, he presented a virile and attractive picture. Joan studied the steady glow in

his olive cheeks and began to wonder if he were handsome.

For half an hour they sailed without a word, then suddenly John glanced at the girl, a wholly impersonal glance. "Get into the bottom of the boat, hold fast, and keep your head down," he said sharply. "Quick!"

Joan scrambled to obey.

"Will she, oh, will she jibe?" murmured John. Crouching forward, he wrapped the sheet around his left arm, then he leaped for the stern of the boat and, jamming the tiller hard a-starboard with his knee, cast the rope free from the thole.

The boat gave a sickening lurch and shipped enough water to make Joan scream with fright. Almost immediately it righted to a deafening slatting of the sail, for a second the bows hovered as though in dire doubt, and then gradually paid off to the wind. The sail filled and went over with a slap and a bang. John let go the tiller, braced his feet and hung to the sheet with both hands.

"Ye gods!" he chanted as the boat swept forward on the tack, "will she jibe!"

"Please —" stuttered Joan, "p-please don't do it again." Then her eyes were drawn to the shore, still so close that it seemed to overhang them. "Why," she cried, "you almost ran it into the woods!"

"Don't call her 'it,' please," said John, shipping the loose floorboards with his feet. "Say, d' you think we can do it?"

"Do what?" asked Joan, climbing to a more comfortable and dignified position.

"Make a ring around those rosies," said John with a nod of his head toward the three yachts.

"I — I don't know," said Joan.

"Neither do I," muttered John, "— yet. But I'll tell you all about it in an hour."

In half an hour they went around again and twenty minutes later swept down on the enemy, so close that Joan gasped.

"Say," called the youthful skipper of the nearest yacht, a sheepish grin on his face and greed in his eyes, "what boat's that?"

"The *Joan*, you landlubber," shouted John, grinning back over his shoulder.

Soon after, they turned and ran for their home port. During the long beat back to the boathouse John tried out his boat in many ways and taught Joan many things with an eye to making her into a crew. When they came to anchor she waded ashore and put on her shoes and stockings while he made all snug on board. The sun was setting as he joined her, the supper hour far past, but she was loath to leave. She stood shivering, her wide eyes fastened on the boat which with its big wing furled looked the very negation of life and flight.

"She's mighty ugly," said John, "*but —*"

"It — *t-t-is n't* ugly," chattered Joan.

"Isn't she?" said John with a pleased smile. "Well, let me tell you, and I know. She's not a boat at all; she's a race horse."

He picked up his coat and wrapped it around Joan's wet shoulders, buttoning it under her chin. Once they

reached the road, they raced for the house and arrived there quite warm and panting.

Mr. Tupper was pacing up and down in front of the kitchen door, scowling and chewing on a straw. "Here they be!" he called and Mrs. Tupper appeared at his back.

"Oh, mother!" gasped Joan.

"There, there," said Mrs. Tupper. "No call to bust yerself tellin' us all about it. We seen ye. Come in an' eat your supper."

The moment Joan took off John's coat and displayed her wet clothes John saw Mrs. Tupper exercise authority for the first time. She said nothing; she merely gripped the girl by the arm and rushed her up the narrow stairs that led from the kitchen to the bedrooms above.

As John was putting on his coat, Mr. Tupper entered the kitchen and stood in a corner as still as a hogshead except for his jaws and the wagging straw. It seemed to John, who was feeling intensely uncomfortable, that the scowl on Mr. Tupper's face was gradually deepening, but if there was a storm impending it suddenly cleared as Joan, warmly dressed and her cheeks glowing from a rubdown, reappeared, followed by her mother.

Mrs. Tupper turned her attention to John. "Be you wet, too?"

"Oh, no," said John, starting for the supper table where Joan was already seating herself.

Mrs. Tupper adroitly slipped her hand under his coat. "You never *was* whipped for lying, was yer? You oughter change yer things er take somethin'."

“Thanks,” said John. “I would n’t mind a tot of whisky or a glass of port.”

Mr. Tupper fixed him with a stern glance. “Young feller,” he rumbled, “we don’t hold by ’toxicatin’ sper-rits on this farm ner nary a store licker. You ’ll take some of Mrs. Tupper’s peach brandy er you ’ll take nothin’.”

John smiled and said, “Certainly, anything will do.”

He grasped the generous wineglass held out to him by Mrs. Tupper and in the innocence of his heart poured its contents down his throat. The next instant he choked and was gasping for breath. Confused images of a knockout blow, a river of lava, and childhood’s visions of hell whirled through his brain. Subconsciously he heard Mrs. Tupper say in a loud solicitous whisper, “Musta swallowed it the wrong way.”

CHAPTER XVIII

JOHN buried the brandy, more potent than any ship's grog, under an enormous supper. As he was finishing he heard Mrs. Tupper exclaim in a whisper, "Land sakes!" and following her gaze and that of Mr. Tupper, he saw an entrancing sight. Joan had sunk deep in her chair and fallen fast asleep.

Something in the childishness of her pose drew moisture to her parents' eyes. They tiptoed nearer and hung over her, their weather-beaten faces breaking into smiles that made them suddenly young. In a moment John felt himself altogether forgotten. He rose and slipped quietly toward the door. As he went he heard Mrs. Tupper say, "Le's see ef we c'n put her to bed without rousin' her,—like we used to."

John strode down the hill, his brow knitted in a puzzled frown. He was striving as usual to place Joan. All his wanderings had given him no experience of a dominant younger generation and it was no wonder that Joan, following her own sweet will straight through the decalogue of the European don'ts of a *jeune fille* and coming out apparently unscathed, should throw his mind into a hopeless maze.

Had he not been so taken up with puzzling over Joan he might have found time and occasion for several equally troubling speculations in regard to a certain

Mr. John Bogardus who had been traveling very fast these last few days. Speed is a fine thing in the air or on the ground, but it is just as well to know where one is going to end up. John was conscious of the wind on his cheeks but he was n't even looking out ahead for a hairpin turn or an air-pocket.

Back in the boathouse he was too sleepy to think even of Joan, and without stopping to take off his damp clothes he stretched out and slept the sleep of defiant youth. He awoke late, breakfasted, and, after going through his toilet, sat down to wait for Joan. She did not come. Presently he grew restless and made his way to the house. It was deserted, the whole farm was deserted, save for old Ben, who sat on the steps of the kitchen door with one ear cocked toward the range inside.

"What are you doing?" asked John, bewildered.

"Watchin' the dinner," grunted Ben.

"Why," said John, "where's Mrs. Tupper? Where's everybody?"

"Gone where everybody is, excep' steady old men an' young limbs o' Satan."

"To church!" exclaimed John, promptly. "I'd forgotten all about what day it was!"

He sat down beside Ben and the two smoked for an hour in unbroken silence. At the end of the hour the old man got up, went into the kitchen, stirred the fire, sniffed into the oven, and moved over various pots and pans. As he finished, a clatter of wheels was heard in the distance. The spring wagon appeared, Mr. Tupper driving with Mrs. Tupper beside him and three farm

hands packed into the back seat. Joan was not with them.

Far behind and driving very slowly, perhaps to allow for the settling of the dust of the spring wagon, came a light buggy drawn by a restive team of sorrel horses. The sun glinted on the high lights of their sweating flanks, on the gay red paint of the spokes of the wheels, and on the gleaming polish of the buggy's black body. In the narrow seat was a blur of white, sitting very close to a pair of broad shoulders. As the buggy slowly climbed the hill to the house John's heart slowly climbed down and down. He wondered why.

With a flick of his whip Broad-shoulders sent his horses plunging to the right-about and brought the buggy with a grand flourish to a sudden stop, the off wheel almost grazing the mounting block beside the driveway. Joan, looking very sweet in a quite new big hat and a fresh white frock, stepped lightly out.

"So-long, Harry," she said with a smile.

"So-long, Joan," answered the stranger, an extraordinarily healthy, comely, and well-dressed young man. Then, with a wave of his whip toward everybody, he touched up his horses again and in a moment had swirled down the hill and out of sight.

John looked at the group about him and, for the first time since he had turned tramp, felt decidedly under-dressed. Tupper, Mrs. Tupper, the farm hands, and even old Ben who had slipped on a coat, to say nothing of Joan who was just a little more of a glory than usual, were clean and resplendent in their best store clothes. Their stiff Sunday habit, the conscious weekly cleanli-

ness of the men, and the hushed awe New England women wear on the Sabbath day along with their best lace mitts shut him out completely and gave him an inkling of how a sinner ought to feel in the presence of the righteous.

All through dinner he was depressed and ate in silence. When they left the table he got a chance to whisper to Joan, "What are you going to do this afternoon?"

"Going for a ride with Harry," she answered absently.

John plunged down the dusty road to the boathouse, thinking of a lot of things he could do to kill time. He could pick berries or sleep or bathe or go for a swim or a sail by himself. He sat down under the pines and wondered why he did n't feel like doing any of these delightful things; then he got up and languidly prepared to fish. He was too indifferent to get out a boat and consequently perched himself at the end of the boat-house.

The first victim to his bait gave him a tug that almost landed him in the water. He had a moment of pleasurable excitement, which came to an anticlimax when he dragged out a slimy eel. He sighed as he crawled ashore and put away his tackle. Even the fish in the vicinity knew better than to bite on Sunday.

He did not bother to go to the house for supper nor for breakfast the next morning; out of a sort of spite he ate the eel instead. Just as he was finishing the last of it Joan appeared, swinging a pail.

"I — I thought you'd like to shave this morning."

John nodded to her gravely; he was still feeling depressed. As he took the pail, something rattled in the bottom. He looked in and found a sizable piece of a broken mirror. "For me?" he asked with a grin.

Joan nodded. She sat down, clasped her hands nervously and said, "Oh, *do* hurry up."

But John did not hurry. He took the bit of mirror, caught the sun on it, and started heliographing absent-mindedly at a knothole in the boathouse wall. "I suppose you want to go for a sail," he drawled.

"Yes, I do," answered Joan.

"Not much of a breeze this morning. More of a day for a drive I should say."

Joan considered him gravely. "All right," she said after a moment. "Hurry up and shave; then we'll go to the barn and hitch up whatever is n't haying."

John stared at her, then tossed aside the looking-glass and said impatiently, "Who's Harry?"

"Oh," said Joan, suddenly smiling. "Why did n't you say so? Harry's just Harry — a nice boy that I've always known and that's always known me. Now, do you feel better?"

John grunted and prepared to shave. As he shaved a breeze arose and began to dapple the lake with cat's-paws. He felt the wind and out of the corner of his eye saw it speckling across the water. His spirits began to rise, his eyes shone with mischief. Without stopping to wash the leavings of soap from his neck he sprang to his feet, rushed at Joan, picked her up, and started for the boat with a shout.

The girl turned suddenly pale. With all her strength

she pushed him from her and struggled so that he had to set her down with more expedition than grace. She stumbled, caught herself, sprang on a rock, and turned on him.

"How dare you? How dare you pick me up?" she gasped, her eyes blazing.

John stood back and stared at her. "I'm very sorry, Joan," he said gravely. "I was simply going to put you on the boat. I did n't dream I'd make you angry."

Joan glared back at him for a moment; then sat down with her back to him and drew off her shoes and stockings. "Go wash that soap off," she commanded.

Together they waded out to the *Joan*. Once they were well under way they both forgot by-gones and gave themselves up to whole-souled joy in the glorious day, the laughing water, and the sinuous swirling rush of the boat.

They sailed far that morning, and gradually John began to feel the scenery pressing in upon him as though it were striving to link the present to some vague recollection. Suddenly they shot past a point and his eyes came up with a shock against a great building that crowded down on the lake and seemed even to extend one big toe over the water. "Why," he cried, "what — what's that?"

In his excitement he clutched the tiller toward him and the *Joan* promptly luffed into the wind and was taken all aback. Joan peered under the flapping sail. "That?" she said. "That's the Lake Grand Hotel."

John stared all about him. Yes, there was the very veranda upon which he and his father had spent so

many long hours, and there was the pier, looking like the hotel's big toe, from which he had plunged, to be rescued by good old Captain Ike. And the point back there, the point they had just passed, that was where he had stood alone and seen the bareheaded girl in the catboat. He gave a great sigh.

"Why," said Joan, "what's the matter? Haven't you ever seen a hotel before?"

"Yes," said John, absently. "I've seen it before." He worked the tiller slowly to and fro until the boat wore round to the wind.

"Every night they dance," said Joan, "and every Saturday night they give a *big* dance."

"Do you dance?" asked John, his attention caught by a wistfulness in her voice that seemed to link her to his thoughts of the lonely time he had once spent at the hotel which had evidently changed its name during the years that had intervened.

Joan nodded. "But I've only danced with girls except once."

"Why don't you go here?" asked John. "Or don't they let any one except guests?"

"Oh, yes," said Joan. "They'd let me, only there's no one to go with. Harry took me once but he doesn't dance and we just sat and sat. It was *awful*."

"To-day's Monday," said John. "Next Saturday I'll take you."

Joan glanced at him, started to laugh, and then checked herself in amazement. Her tramp was actually in earnest! He saw her eyes sweep over him, take in his shirt, open at the throat, his tough but dilapidated

trousers and his clumsy footwear, squashy from continued soakings. Her cheeks flushed as she turned her eyes away and said, "I could n't — I would n't — I — I don't think I want to go very much after all."

"What you mean," said John, grinning, "is that you would die of shame to be seen with me."

Joan gave his clothes another glance and tossed her head. "It is n't *you*," she said defiantly. "I know you're clean as water."

"You listen to me," said John. "Take my advice and be ready to go to the dance next Saturday night — if your mother will really let you."

"Why should n't she?" asked Joan. "Did n't I tell her we were going to sail under the first full moon for luck? If we stop a while to dance, what is that? Do you think a summer dance at the Lake Grand is a ball with glad clothes and cotillion favors and — and diamond necklaces — and chaperones?"

"I'm stupid," said John. "Next Saturday there's a full moon and we certainly can't sail under it till it's good and high. No boating to-morrow, by the way. I've got to work. I need money."

Joan's face had been slowly lighting up with anticipation, now it grew anxious. "Why," she said, "how much do you think you can earn between this and Saturday?"

"I only want fifty cents," said John, and smiled at the heavy cloud that suddenly settled in her eyes.

CHAPTER XIX

THE next day John took his place in the fields and worked with a will. After supper he went to Mr. Tupper and asked for his pay.

"How much d'ye think you're going to get?" snapped the farmer.

"Fifty cents," said John, promptly.

"Hmph!" grunted Mr. Tupper, handing over the money. "Want to sign on for a month at the same rate? Yer grub only runs fer another two days, thank gum."

"No, thanks," said John, biting the silver coin suspiciously. "This will last me for a long while."

The next morning he trudged to the nearest town and sent two telegrams; one asking for money, and another directing that a suitcase he had left ready-packed be sent to him by express. On Friday he made the trip again, found his money but no suitcase. He waited all day and did various things to keep himself from worrying, had his hair cut, ate more than was good for him, and indulged in two packets of cigarettes that seemed meager fare after weeks of pipe smoking.

That evening at supper he was so distraught that Joan approached after the meal to give him a chance to confide his troubles, but he only smiled at her and said, "Don't forget. Full moon to-morrow."

She watched him as he walked out, and frowned and smiled at the same time. She frowned because these last three days had puzzled her sorely, and she smiled because she was beginning to feel thrills in prospect.

Outside, John ran into Mr. Tupper. "I think I'd like to be a summer-boarder for a while," he said. "What is this? A dollar house?"

"Three-fifty a week," said Mr. Tupper, promptly, reminiscent of days before the Lake Grand had cut out its small competitors.

John paid for a week in advance and started down the hill. Mr. Tupper stared at the money in his hand, then at John's receding figure. "Hi!" he shouted. He waddled down to where John waited and returned to him one of the dollar bills. "Three fifty's board *and* lodgin'," he grunted and turned on his heel. John watched the evolution eagerly; he never gave up hopes that some day Mr. Tupper would lose his balance and roll into the lake before help could reach him.

The next day John was up early and walked to the town before the sun grew hot. To his immense relief his suitcase had come. He weighed it thoughtfully at the end of his arm and looked long at a sign that read, "O'Hanlon's Bait and Livery Stable." The word bait had been partially obliterated, Mr. O'Hanlon having evidently suffered from the misguided attentions of prospective fishermen.

John hesitated long but finally decided to take no curious, hired driver within hail of his peaceful lair. Hot, dusty, and tired he reached the boathouse well after the noon hour.

The sun had scarcely set when Joan came down through the pines in her peculiar run, made up of swift dashes and sudden pauses. John stood up to meet her. She stopped stock still and stared at him, not in amazement but with a gaze that was half quick girlish pleasure and half shrewd calculation. Then her cheeks flushed and her eyes shone. "Am I—am I all right?" she asked quite humbly.

John was standing well out from the trees in the full light of the afterglow. He was dressed in a snowy white Madras shirt, well-pressed, white flannel trousers, held up by a belt, and patent leather pumps. He carried a white flannel coat over his arm and wore black silk socks in a day when silk socks were still caviar to the multitude. It was when Joan drew near enough to take in the silk socks that she grew humble.

"You!" cried John. "Why, you're always all right. Come, see what I've made."

He led her to where a little pier ran out far enough to allow her to step on the *Joan* dry-shod. In the stern of the boat he had spread a clean bath-towel to save the freshness of her frock.

"You think of everything," said Joan as she settled down with a sigh of content.

All the way to the hotel John humored the boat so that not a drop of water splashed in. When he took Joan's hand to help her out, it was hot and trembling a little. He slipped on his coat, leaned over and looked into her eyes; she gave him a warm glance and laughed a nervous little laugh. The dance was already in full swing and as they went up the pier the music seemed

to get into her feet and tangle them. She laid one hand on John's arm. "Not — not too fast," she said.

She was feeling all the thrills of a girl going to her first big party, and anticipation was so sweet that she did not wish to hurry. She walked with her head hanging, her eyes fixed on her little feet, and dreamed of how she and John would glide out to the music of a waltz. As they entered the big room she threw back her head and showed to an admiring world a face aglow with youth and happiness.

Those were the days when the two-step and the waltz jogged along together like a lonely married couple of Malthusian tendencies, self-centered and self-satisfied. John had never two-stepped but he thought he could waltz. As soon as they were on the floor he turned to Joan, clicked his heels together, bowed and clasped his right hand about her waist. With his left he caught her right and extended it to the full length of her arm. Holding her as far from him as possible so that they formed an approximate equilateral triangle, he began to whirl her around in the most approved Continental style, his eyes gazing approvingly on her face, never before so lovely.

Poor Joan danced a few jerky steps before her brain could readjust itself from dreamland. A bewildered look came into her eyes as she wondered if this were some heartless joke of John's; then she saw the look of concern dawning in his face and her beautiful house of cards tumbled with a crash that echoed through the room — at least, she thought it did. The light died from her eyes and her cheeks went white. By a com-

non impulse they both stopped dancing and made their crestfallen way to two chairs and sat down.

"Joan," said John, "what was the matter?"

She did not answer, for her throat was full of sobs that she was swallowing as fast as she could from the bottom to keep the top one from coming out. Her faintly rounded breasts were heaving desperately and the blush of ridicule which is about three times as red as the blush of shame had routed the pallor from her cheeks.

But there was no ridicule. The throng of dancers had been altogether too intent on its own affairs to see the tumble of Joan's house of cards, much less hear it. As she realized this small saving grace she sighed with relief.

"Oh, Joan, what is the matter?" said John.

She opened her lips to answer but laughed shortly instead and closed them. Before he could press his question the music stopped and couples started pressing for the doors. Joan and John caught the eye of a youth, none other than the yacht skipper with whom John had bandied words on the lake. With him was the girl who had shared his discomfiture.

A moment later John looked up to find the two smiling at him; he recognized them and grinned back. They approached and the young man held out his hand. "My name's Marsten," he said, "and this is my sister, Sally. Won't you introduce us?"

"Certainly," said John, rising. "This is Miss Joan Tupper and, I'm John Bogardus. We sailed over from Tupper's farm at the other end of the lake."

"In the *Joan*, eh?" said the young man with a laugh. "You certainly put it all over us the other day. When we first caught sight of her we thought she was a joke. There was a joke hanging around, all right, but we sort of misplaced it."

"It was her first day," said John. "I was just feeling her out. She's a race horse."

"Look here," said Marsten, "we are n't quite such a bunch of landlubbers as you think. At first when we saw you coming along like a plate edge-up walking a tight rope, we thought you were just a common garden fool that did n't know a boat could blow over, but long before you were out of sight we knew you'd have wiped us if you'd been sailing a bathtub."

John laughed and shook his head. "You're wrong," he said. "I tell you she's a race horse; by a fluke, of course."

While they argued, Sally Marsten sat down beside Joan and in five minutes had found out all about the tragedy that was making her so sad. Sally looked up at John speculatively. "Well," she said, "even if he can't dance, he's awfully good looking."

"Is he?" said Joan, absently.

"Cheer up," said Sally. "You dance the next waltz with Charlie — that's my brother — and after that —"

The music of another waltz started and Marsten began to look around the room vaguely.

"Charlie," called his sister, "you're engaged right here for this dance."

"Of course," said Marsten, stepping towards Joan with a smile.

She rose and a moment later all her dreams of this longed-for night began to come true. Marsten's right hand was spread high against her back, holding her firmly to him. With his other hand he held her right loosely against his shoulder. They glided away not as two, severally executing a set figure, but as one — one with each other, one with the music, one with the very spirit of the dance. Into Joan's face came back the happy, eager glow and her eyes grew dreamy.

John stood and stared, first at Joan, then at every other girl in the room. He had never seen girls held like that before, not *jeunes filles*! Joan's cheek was close to Marsten's shoulder, just grazing it, but there were other girls that frankly pillowed their fluffy heads on their partners' breasts and clung so closely that there really seemed no reason why they should touch their feet to the floor at all.

"*Macabre!*" muttered John.

"What did you say?" asked Sally Marsten.

John turned around sharply. "I beg your pardon. I — My mind was just wandering. May I sit down?"

She made room for him and John tried to give her all his attention, but his eyes were constantly being drawn back to the dancers. He had reason to know that he could dance like that himself; he *had* danced like that, but with masked women, not babes. For these girls *were* babes. He did them that justice as

his eyes searched each face in vain for the open book of knowledge.

He might have continued his observations till the music stopped had he not seen a young man look with consternation at the idle Miss Marsten and immediately start tacking across the floor in desperate haste. John turned to her. "You must forgive me but I've been getting my bearings. Wouldn't you like to finish this?"

Mindful of Joan's tale of woe, Sally got up, groaning inwardly as she offered the toes of her dainty slippers to sacrifice, but the next moment she gasped with amazement, wondered what had happened, and then decided to give herself up to the joy of movement and puzzle things out afterwards.

John was not one of those dancers who have to warm up to their step. He swept his partner out across the floor to the very throb of the music. Holding her close he bore her through the maze of the crowded room so securely that she felt free, as though they two had more room than they needed. There were rushes and pauses in his movement, but they were like the hieroglyphics that hang on the notes in music, they fitted in.

Sally answered the last chord of the waltz with a sigh from her heart. "Well," she said as they made for their seats, "all *I've* got to say is that you dance as well as you sail a boat."

"Do I?" said John, eagerly — and started looking around for Joan.

CHAPTER XX

A GREAT *viveur* once said that any man can sum up his life by counting the sensations he has felt on the fingers of one hand. Under the cynicism was the kernel of truth that gives the sting to wit. As long as John lived he would count his first real waltz with Joan as one of the five great emotional surges of his life.

During the moments that he had neglected Sally Marsten to stare at the dancers, he had been looking through French eyes and beheld a world of *demi-vierges*, vestal virgins polluted by a too intimate public gaze, fresh fruit keeping just its skin intact but busily rubbing off the bloom. But his dance with Sally carried him away, he was caught in the witchery of rhythmic motion, and the rush of blood to the brain that comes from any exhilarating movement raised him above the level of sane speculations.

Whatever had been John's physical experience he was by nature clean-minded, and in the fullness of his youth and of his knowledge, both open to learn and eager for illusions. As he took Joan in his arms his tingling blood as well as his excited though puzzled brain were held in control by the memory that it was this same girl that had turned upon him in a rage because he had dared lay familiar hands upon her person.

But there is a big difference between control and subjection. Through all that waltz John held in his emotions only as one holds in a team of blooded horses that has had more oats than exercise and is in two minds to bolt just for the fun of the thing. From time to time he looked down at Joan's face so intimately close, at her hair that held him within the short radius of its faintly fragrant aura, and at her rounded eyelids, drooped down as though to curtain too palpitating thoughts.

Gradually, with her warm body so trustingly surrendered to his embrace, he felt a surge of tenderness rise in him, a welling desire not to harm but to protect. This impulse to protect was still strong in him when he and Joan, promising to come again, said good-by to the Marstens and boarded their little craft. Soon they were running free before a quartering breeze and John, steadying the tiller with his knee, was taking off his coat.

"What are you going to do?" asked Joan.

For answer he threw the coat around her shoulders and tried to button it under her chin.

"No, no," cried Joan. "You — you take half."

He stared at her, somehow he did not want to laugh. "Let me button it or it will be always blowing off," he said.

"You 'll be cold," said Joan as he sat down.

"Not if you sit close to me."

"I — I *am* sitting close," said Joan, laughing nervously and coming still nearer.

The breeze, swirling from the cupped sail, caught

the free side of the coat and tossed it. John put his arm around the girl as though to hold it down. He felt her body tremble; her lips parted, but she said nothing.

“Are you warm now?” he asked.

She nodded her head. “Are you?”

“Yes.”

For a long time they sailed in silence, their bodies throbbing against each other; then, slowly but firmly, John drew her close and closer to him. She looked up, her eyes hazy. She was not frightened nor dismayed, for the dream was sweet. Their faces were very near together and John’s was coming nearer. Their eyes met and questioned; then Joan turned her head abruptly in denial. She pressed him gently from her.

Just then the luff of the sail slacked and there was a warning flap. John twitched the helm and sent the boat back on her course. Soon Joan settled into the hollow of his shoulder again and so, with his arm holding her to him and keeping her warm, they sailed in silence under the full moon and brought up at last in the shadow of the black reflected pines.

Any reasonable person would judge that the beat of their pulse had long since calmed down; but such was not the case. Take two young hearts, put them close together, so close that they touch, and their capacity for beating at double quick time is unmeasurable on the dial of any clock. As John helped Joan to the little wharf that he had made for her, her hand trembled in his grasp with the same vibration that his hand trembled over hers.

With nervous haste he anchored the boat and stowed the sail, then he sprang on the wharf and stopped, his eyes full of the picture before him, the same picture that had welcomed him on his first day at the lake, only softer, glorified by night. Joan stood just among the pines and drew all things upon her. Moonlight, lake and rock-bound shore, even the high protecting pines, converged upon her so that she caught the eye like a beam of light in a darkened room.

John walked slowly toward her, his lips smiling, his eyes burning feverishly. Bathed in the light of the moon she looked so still and cold, so eternally fixed, it was as though he approached some phantom statue, adored by forest and lake and night. But as he drew near and caught the haze in her eyes, the quick rise and fall of her bosom, and saw her lips parted by tremulous breath, such a wave surged through his veins as carried him plunging forward with outstretched arms, life toward life, youth to youth.

Just before her he paused as on a heady verge. Their eyes met. Her feet did not move but she herself swayed gently toward him as a long-stemmed flower sways toward the light. He took her in his arms and crushed her to him. She raised her face and her hands, put her hands around his neck. Their lips met in the ecstasy of a long, long kiss. Then a flush of maiden shame suddenly flamed in her cheeks. She dropped her head, pressed her face hard against his shoulder, and sobbed.

He held her close, patted her back, and kissed her hair, moist and tumbled by the wind but sweet and soft

to his lips. "Don't cry," he said. "You must n't cry, Joan. It's all right. I won't hurt you."

She stopped sobbing suddenly and looked up into his face with questioning eyes. There was nothing there but tenderness, a hot tenderness such as women love best. She turned from him and with his arm about her they walked slowly up through the pines and along the sleepy, dusty road that seemed to give little puffs of rage at being stirred and wakened at that unwonted hour. A little way from the house Joan disengaged herself and held up her lips for a childish, good night kiss.

"Don't come any further, John," she whispered. "And don't come up in the morning. I — I'll tell them myself."

CHAPTER XXI

JOHN stood watching her till she reached the house and she noticed it and was pleased. How black would have been the ending of her day of joy could she have known that he stood thus rooted to the spot, even as an ox stays placed after being struck by lightning. For a moment he was too dazed to move, too dazed to think.

As Joan disappeared from view he turned as though he had been released and stumbled back down the road. Never had he given marriage a thought; it seemed now as though for it alone he had no philosophy. Was it thus that marriage came upon men, swooping down when they were least upon their guard, drunk and blinded for having sipped of the wine of the flesh?

There are thousands of men to whom marriage is such a natural consummation that they look back upon it and class it along with those landmarks that stand in their lives like even fence-posts in a row, the day they had their first tooth pulled, the day they put on long trousers, the day they had their hair cut by a real barber, the awful, self-conscious day on which they joined the church, and the day they got married. But these men are almost invariably communal, they have lived all their lives in a single circumambieny, perhaps have had their eyes fixed on a single girl from childhood,

and, if they have n't, go meekly out to market the minute their father says, "Time you was lookin' fer a wife, ain't it?"

There was nothing communal about John, and never had he felt the lack of sustaining ties, of the bolstering of convention and custom and habit, so sharply as he felt it to-night. What had he done? What will-o'-the-wisp had he dashed after to find his feet thus suddenly sunk and held in the morass of a staid world's standard of honor?

"You are in honor bound to see it through," boomed Platitude in his ears and he accepted the sentence with the unquestioning fatalism of chivalrous youth, but he could not keep his mind from fluttering wildly against the bars of the cage nor stem the mounting fear in his breast. Only now he had been free, free to go and come as he willed, free as ever man was to seize life and mold it in his own hands, to battle with it unshackled and conquer or be conquered.

Now a burden was upon him, a soft and tender burden. His face almost cleared as he thought back to that glorious moment by the boathouse. How she had clung to him, how her moist lips had risen hot to his kiss and clung to his mouth! How warm had been the pressure of her rounded, throbbing breasts, how lovable her trust and surrender! And the waltz in which he had first held her close. Could he ever forget its long-drawn sweetness? Could life with her be like that?

As he reached the lake the freshening breeze struck his brow with a cooling hand and called to him to forget his woes and come out and romp with it. For a mo-

ment he stood and thought of sleep for his tired body, but his racing brain jeered at the mere thought of slumber. He jumped into the boat, unfurled the sail, and glided away from the shore.

Again he questioned, Could life with her be like that? For answer the little waves slapped noisily at the bows of the *Joan*, the peak of the sail bobbed up and down in unceasing affirmation, but the lake, the moonlight, the sentinel pines, and the embracing shores pressed to his eyes like an empty frame, a frame that once had held a picture. He tried to bring Joan back, to fix her in this meaningless void and restore order to chaos, but her magnetism was of too small a range to bridge the short gap in distance and time that separated her from him.

His mind turned to more material thoughts. Having accepted his predicament, he tried to look forward and discern the road he was to travel. Given a few thousand dollars, a young girl, a young man, and a marriage in the offing, what was to follow? Naturally a house. But where? He did not know. A few thousand dollars may be a widow's cruse to a strong young man, but to a strong young couple with the basic attribute of a multiplication table, they too must multiply to keep step. What was he to do? Go back and teach? With the memory of freedom fresh upon him he rebelled at the very thought.

And what of Joan? What was she, this tender thing that held him so fast, so inexorably, in her two small hands? One day she had blazed out at him in anger at his touch, the next she had willingly given herself

intimately not only to his arms but to the arms of half a dozen strangers. The dance had gone to her head as it had to his. He flushed and winced at the thought of her ever again yielding herself indiscriminately to the arms of any newcomer, conventionally heralded by an introduction. Why should he wince? Was it a sign that in truth he loved her?

He pondered on that thought a long time. Perhaps all men felt the fear that he was feeling on the eve of marriage. Then his mind turned a corner. He remembered the fitting out of the *Joan*. Never before had he worked like that. Why had he? Suddenly he knew. She had driven him, driven him as only a woman can drive. As he looked ahead he could see her driving him through the years, not with remonstrances nor giving him of her courage, but with that tensivity that he felt vaguely was part of her fiber, part of the tradition of the women of her race, whose ambition, long generations ago born in thrift, had evolved a monster greed to match the monster hoarding achievements of their men.

To what herculean efforts might he not be driven by that same play of locked hands, of a girl's face drawn almost to age by concentration on the little thing desired, of eyes that urged, commanded, and condemned with all the variations of a whip in the hand of a master and, when all else failed, of tears that bit like the tip of the lash!

The boat suddenly shipped green water over her bows and a plume of spray soaked him from head to foot. He laughed and stood up to the challenge.

With the tiller held between his ankles he paid out the sheet and raced the *Joan* down wind in long swirls till the steadily growing waves threatened to poop her. Crouching at her stern, he stared under the arching sail and watched the dim line of a far shore coming toward him rapidly like the shadow of a monster cloud.

An impulse came upon him to wreck the *Joan*, to pile her up, smash her, on the rocky shore. He felt himself yielding as though only thus could he give vent to his rebellion, when suddenly a memory came upon him — a memory of the beetling billows of the Western Ocean in storm. With that noble recollection a calmness settled on his spirit. He measured this little boat, these little waves, and the little thing they had moved him to do, against the immensity of a mighty sea, and in that moment he was sobered, exalted above petty fears. With a swirl he brought the *Joan* up all standing, whirled her on her heel, and stood back in long tacks for the boathouse.

His troubles seemed to grow smaller, his fears lost their poignancy, and he smiled indulgently at the contemptuous little waves about him. He was glad that he had taken the measure of his cowardice, for now he was beginning to feel that he could face whatever life brought him with a steady mind. By a sheer effort of his will he turned his thoughts to Joan, not to her strength nor to her avidity, but to her weakness, her tenderness, and most of all to that flash of maidenhood recoiling from his touch that stood out like a torch amid the darkness of the things he did not know about her but had dreaded.

The chill of dawn was in the air as he laid down on his strip of carpet in the boathouse and covered himself with two dry coats from his bag. The calmness that had come upon him acted like an opiate and he slept soon and long. When he awoke the sun was high in the heavens. For a moment he lay collecting his thoughts, then the memory of all the night before had brought swept over him. He remembered that Joan had told him not to come to the house in the morning, and smiled. What if instead she had told him to come and he had overslept the hour?

With a shrug at the high sun he bathed and made his toilet with special care, ate a few biscuits, and strolled out among the pines. Had Joan too slept late? It was comforting to think so. He sat down and smoked, trying to make himself forget that his stomach was in need of a great deal of something hot and filling. He looked at his watch and saw that it was almost ten o'clock. Ten o'clock at the farm was half the day gone. He began to feel a manly impatience. Then his wandering eyes fell on a spot of white on the boathouse door.

The spot of white had never been there before; he was sure of that. He looked at it lazily, wondering what it was. Suddenly it fluttered; it was as though it had beckoned to him.

He got up and walked toward it, slowly at first, then faster, as he saw that it was the half of a half sheet of paper pinned with a sliver of wood to a crack in the door. He took it down and stared at the words, without salutation or signature, that were written on it

in pencil. "I am frightened. Something came over me last night and now I am ashamed and afraid. Please go away."

The words looked so even on paper, so round and impersonal, that he could not imagine them as coming from Joan. Not till he repeated them over aloud with little gasping pauses, as she would have said them, did they convince him. Then he stood for a long moment, staring out over the lake. The bit of paper fluttered from his fingers. Presently he stooped, picked it up, and read it again.

To his amazement his first feeling was not one of relief but of primordial desire. He turned and started walking rapidly up through the pines. She was his; he would prove that she was his. In his heart he felt the assurance of conquest. Once she could hear his voice, feel his arms about her again, she would forget her shame and laugh at her fears. He would go to her and show her.

Then he stopped suddenly and stood staring vacantly before him, not at the pines nor the briar patch nor at the dusty road beyond, but at a vision of Joan as she had been during the boat-building, when her tenderness and all her appealing soft ways had hardened in the crucible of a small desire till they held the cutting edge of a diamond.

He turned and walked back toward the boathouse, at first slowly but unconsciously hastening at every step. Reaction had set in. He remembered the sea of fears through which he had fought his way the night before and now those fears suddenly came back again bigger

than ever. He no longer likened them to the contemptible little waves of the lake; he did not stop to liken them to anything, he was in too much of a hurry.

He rushed to the boathouse and started cramming his things into the suitcase. When it was packed and locked he stood before the door of the friendly little shanty that had sheltered him so freely and so well and asked himself whither he should go.

His few weeks on the road had taught him one tenet of trampdom — that a hobo with a bag is the most suspicious of individuals. He pictured himself tramping with a suitcase and smiled at the absurdity of it, but his lips straightened quickly to another thought. What if Joan should change her mind? What if he should meet her as he started away and she should come toward him with swift little rushes in her walk and speech and repentance in her big gray eyes?

He picked up a charred twig and printed beneath her note, "I will send the boat back," fastened the slip of paper to the boathouse door, tossed his suitcase into the *Joan*, and a moment later set sail for the Lake Grand Hotel.

CHAPTER XXII

AS he sailed the full length of the lake he had plenty of time to think. He studied the sudden turn in his affairs and puzzled over the nature of Joan's fright. Had he been wrong in his judgment of her? Which was the illusion, the Joan of the boat-making or the Joan of the dance or the Joan that had blazed out in anger when he picked her up? None. They were all there gathering slowly to the final woman, but the Joan that had blazed out in anger was the Joan of that frightened little note.

He suffered a twinge of remorse, for a moment he felt himself belittled, filled with regret for the evaporated exaltation that on the night before had come to him almost as a victory and that now he was finally wiping out in flight. But the mood soon passed. Life once more was a cup that brimmed with freedom, and his lips longed for the draft as if the few hours it had been withdrawn had been parching years.

The hotel threw him back as though into a fever, for it was reminiscent of Joan. It held him to the memory of her, drew his thoughts back along the way he had come, and for a moment made him think of bartering even freedom to hold her again in his arms and feel his heart leap to the touch of hers. In panicky haste he arranged with the wharfman about the boat,

saw the Marstens and told them he had been called away, expressed his bag to New York, and, once more in his travel-stained suit of rough tweed, set his face toward the west.

As he took the road he felt very sad and lonely and wondered if he could ever forget Joan. He did not try to forget her. At night when he burrowed into a haystack or stretched himself on the floor of a barn or the equally unyielding surface of the bed of some village Mansion Hotel, he would curl his own arm under his neck, imagine that it was her hand that clasped him, and fall asleep to dreams of her.

He had not yet learned that the law of physical magnetism knows no exception and limits men, women, and polarized steel in exactly the same terms of distance and time. Consequently at the end of a bare three weeks he was astonished upon composing himself one night for sleep to find that it was with difficulty that he could visualize Joan. He remembered perfectly the color of her eyes and her hair and the size of her feet and hands, but when he tried to reconstruct her living image, summon her as a breathing and palpitating personality, he had to struggle long and even then was not quite sure that it was Joan and not any other nice young girl that eventually came to his dreams.

For some days he pondered on this discovery, amounting almost to a shock, and then slipped so softly beyond the furthest reach of Joan's magnetic radius that he was forever unconscious of the moment when she became a mere image in the past, something that

could never be quite destroyed or forgotten but that could be comfortably hung on the wall of memory or pasted in its scrap book.

"To forget a woman," he had once read, "go away from her. If she still haunts and troubles, go farther away, for men are held not by women alone but by the tendrils they put out to catch him who is near — tears, present joy and present suffering, children, loving care, aura, and the little things that become great through having been shared. In leaving a woman the railway train should be avoided; it is too quick, it dislocates the double antidotes of magnetism, time, and distance, and its effect is that of the extraction of a back tooth without gas. The ideal way of leaving a woman is by walking."

John had forgotten the prescription. It awoke in his memory only when he had hit by accident on the cure. Now he watched it work with a lazy satisfaction. New scenes came gradually to his view and gradually dimmed the old, so that when on a day in late autumn he stood upon an eminence and looked down upon a toy land of milk and honey, of peaceful houses plumed with smoky spirals, of gleaming water, rich loam, dark blotches of vast orchards still in summer leaf, and undulating carpets of paling vineyards, he saw not the Geneseo Valley but a quite new world, a world whose sudden beauty made him gasp and straightway imagine himself plunging to oblivion and content.

But it is only to the old that beauty spells content. To the young and to explorers in general a thing of beauty is but a clarion call. "What a joy to know that

the world holds this!" cries the fresh heart and immediately plunges on to the eternal question of the open road, "I wonder, does it hold a still fairer jewel?"

So John plunged not down but on, and by the coming of winter found himself mixed up with the barb wire entanglements of the Middle West. Snow and ice in the open froze his vagrant soul and a mere glance at the *doss* houses of the cities, filled to odorous repletion with tramps driven in by the inclement weather, terrified him and made him pay his fare and hasten southward on wheels.

Temporarily short of cash, he decided to hibernate like a bear, engaged himself as helper to a coal-miner, and burrowed into the earth during three long, uninteresting months. The miners, subdued to a low and common level, dulled in mind and face by their grimy routine, seemed to him to crawl in and out to their labors like some monster processional polypod, domesticated and broken to the treadmill. At the first warm breath of spring he gladly turned his back on them and once more set his face westward.

With many pauses and two interludes, one on a cattle ranch and the other at placer mining for gold, he arrived at last on the Pacific coast, that haven of retired magnates and missionaries, unretiring authors, remittance men, health-seekers, real-estate agents, intensive aliens, blatant Native Sons, guilded unions, and a vast horde of quiet people intent on taking a long taste of Heaven here below.

He drifted naturally into San Francisco, San Francisco being one of those world-places that you have to

drift into before you can logically drift out to anywhere else. The western metropolis was not itself in those days; it was in a tantrum, a rage, of reconstruction. Van Ness Avenue looked like an undetermined hybrid, like a languorous reptile that had started to slough its skin and stopped half way. Market Street was one din of rivet-hammers and turmoil; and brick-layers, beggars on horseback at a dollar and a half an hour, were threatening to oust the cream of the Forty-niners from Nob Hill.

On the whole it was not a restful place save for the redeeming, peaceful sea. Blue water and untrammelled distance always made John gasp for breath and his heart swell. He made only a pretense of looking for a shore job, coming back once and again to the waterfront where he could watch the varied craft, get the smell of foreign lands, and speculate on the deep-sea boats' personalities and histories.

He looked idly for the *Alexandrine* and was glad he did not find her, for the warm Pacific slope had already laid its soft charm upon him and held without binding him. "Go," it said continually, "but don't go far." He joined the union and shipped as an able seaman for short coast runs that ate up a year, mostly in bringing down fragrant cargoes of redwood for transshipment or the inland trade. For a month he became a fruit picker and for another a wanderer with a burro in the hills, a camper, not a tramp.

Then, on an evil day, he joined a little steamer bound for Panama, Callao, and the run back. Straightway he felt demeaned as though this pounding in a bee-line

to a destination in an atmosphere of grease, steam, and soot were dragging him down from the high free plane of the *Alexandrine*. He was happy only during his watch at the wheel and even then got merely the attenuated sensations of a motorist driving a street-car on undeviating tracks. At Callao he was reluctantly granted shore-leave for a day, but three hours' wandering about the filthy port sent him on board again, anxious for morning and the hour of departure.

During the last three days of the voyage back to San Francisco a lassitude fell on him that he could not shake off. Once in port he turned over his kit to a boarding house master but refused to follow himself. He felt stifled and plunged forward eagerly as though just beyond he must find fresh air. A street-car stopped in front of him. Feeling suddenly giddy he boarded it and sat down.

His head ached violently and he stared out of the car and clung desperately to the back of the seat in front of him. Even in the open car, the air seemed stifling. He climbed out and walked away, wandering finally through a wide gate into what appeared to be a park, and sat down on the first bench. "What has come over me? What has come over me?" he repeated aloud as he strove against a feeling of nausea.

A moment later he was aware of a gentleman with a long beard just touched with gray and wearing a wide-brimmed soft hat and a worn frock coat. The gentleman stopped before him, stared at him, and said with an astounded air, "Bless my soul!" He felt John's pulse at the wrist and laid a hand that felt very cold

against his brow; then he helped him to his feet; led him out of the garden, and called a cab. As they drove along the streets the jolting sent flashes of unendurable pain through John's aching head and he groaned. The stranger took his hand and held it. Every once in a while he would say, "Bless my soul!" absently, as though his thoughts were very busy with other things than words.

The cab turned away from the flat shore-front, crawled up and up, inch by inch, along a narrow, twisting street, and came to a stop at a gate that opened on a long flight of steps. The gentleman talked pleasantly and pleadingly with the cabman, who reluctantly left his horses and helped with John. At last they came out upon a little lawn shaded by big trees, on the farther side of which stood a large house with a wide, open door. From the door a woman hurried out to meet them.

"What is it, Paul?" she asked anxiously.

The stranger stared at her with the naïve look of astonishment with which he had first cried, "Bless my soul!" to John. "Why," he said, "I found him like this, terribly ill, and he was saying, 'What has come over me? What has come over me?' So — so I brought him home."

A look of fear flashed in the woman's eyes, then she smiled and said, "Bring him in."

John was aware of the cries of romping children, suddenly hushed, of a darkened room, a soft bed and gentle hands settling him comfortably against cool pillows. Later came a doctor and soon after a sudden

commotion in the house, hurried, frightened whispers, a flurry of opening and shutting drawers and closets, then the soft voice of a mother calling good-by from the window. "No, dears, you can't come in. I'll kiss you twice when you come back. Be good. Don't give Mrs. Bartle any trouble and mind Pauline." After that there was silence, the long silence of days and nights on end that watches and helps in a fight for life.

Three weeks later John awoke one morning to find the room flooded with light. He looked out at the blue sky, at the green trees nodding to a cool sea breeze, and with a memory of nightmare still upon him, laughed in his heart and thanked God. The door opened and a young man stepped in briskly. His quick, sure movements seemed out of tune with his face, grave and heavy until he smiled.

"Well, sir," he said, "how do you feel about it now?"

"I feel all right," said John, eagerly. "Are you the doctor?"

The young man nodded. "Dr. McNeil."

"I want to thank you for pulling me through," said John. "What was it?"

"Me?" said the doctor. "I didn't pull you through. Want to see what you look like?" He picked up a hand-mirror and held it before John's eyes.

John stared at the reflection in dismay, not at the pallor nor at the gauntness of his face, nor at the shadows under his eyes, but at the horrible scrubby beard he had grown. "Bring me a razor, please," he said suddenly and started to get out of bed.

"Stop that," said the doctor, sharply. "We'll have a barber for you to-morrow, perhaps, or next day. Look again — just under your left temple."

John did as he was bidden. "Why," he said with a smile, "I've grown a dimple!" Then the smile suddenly left his face and he stared questioningly at the doctor.

"Just one dimple," said McNeil as he laid aside the mirror. "If it had n't been for the nursing you got, the nursing that pulled you through, it might have been a thousand dimples."

John's lips formed slowly on a terrible word. "Smallpox?"

The doctor nodded and smiled. "You're in the house of the Reverend Paul Adams Bradley, retired missionary to the heathen, specializing now on anything down and out, and of his wife Faith."

"What a splendid name for her," said John.

"Yes, isn't it?" said the doctor. "Her name was n't Faith originally. He says he started calling her that the day she promised to marry him and now nobody knows what misnomer she got at the altar."

"I was thinking of the children," said John. "She turned out her children, did n't she?"

The doctor nodded. "They would n't let you be carried to the hospital — not after you'd tumbled into the Reverend Paul's arms that way. They believe in guidance."

John nodded. He was feeling drowsy. "It's a great thing to be a doctor," he murmured. "You know what the rest of us only learn by accident."

“What’s that?” said the doctor, leaning over him.

John’s eyes lit up for a moment. “That the measure of human courage has never yet quite been taken,” he answered, and slept.

BOOK III

Here is amber. . . .

CHAPTER XXIII

AMORNING came when John was bathed, shaved, slipped into one of the Reverend Paul's old-fashioned night-gowns of snowy linen, and propped on a mountain of pillows, to hold his first formal reception.

On this morning the Reverend Paul popped in for a word or two, and twice Faith Bradley stopped for a nod and a smile between household duties. These two were long since familiar figures to John; they were the anchors to which, consciously and unconsciously, he had moored his mind and ridden out a long storm on a lea shore. He had put a mighty strain on them but they had held as though bedded in rock. But presently they two ushered in new faces, two little children of six and seven with wide eyes and excited, parted lips, each led by the hand by Pauline.

Pauline was tall and golden haired, with gray-blue eyes that looked as if they could never falter. She was only twenty-two but seemed unusually mature in body and mind. She was not solemn but she was grave; even her smile was grave, so that it added to her dignity as well as softened it.

The Reverend Paul's eyes lingered on her. "This," he said, "is Pauline, our first-born." He laid his hands on the heads of the two restless children, a boy

and a girl. "And these," he went on with the naïve look of astonishment he so often wore, "are a double-barreled answer to prayer, sir. They came long after. Tell your name," he said to the boy, patting his head.

"Ike," said the youngster, promptly.

The Reverend Paul looked thoughtful for a moment. "Yes," he said mildly, "his name is Isaac. And you tell yours, dear."

The little girl stuttered in her haste to comply and the result was something that sounded like "Kwist-eeen!"

Her father nodded his head. "That's it," he said. "Her name is Kitty."

"Christine, you mean, dear," said Mrs. Bradley.

"Bless my soul!" said the Reverend Paul. "Did I say Kitty? Well, I always do call her Kitty in the morning. Now, young man," he went on, "it's your turn. What do you call yourself in the morning?"

John felt that if he had been standing he would have been swept off his feet. Was it possible that these people, who already were part and parcel of his life, to whom he already owed life and was going to owe more, did not know his name? He stared at them all and spoke like a child. "My name is John," he said.

Ike and Kitty repeated it gravely to each other as though it settled finally a long disputed point. Pauline smiled and settled her eyes on John expectantly. He looked steadily back at her and spoke to her alone as if she had questioned him aloud, "John Bogardus." He paused but she still watched him. "Able seaman," he went on and paused again. "Formerly," he added

heavily, "assistant university professor of Romance languages."

Pauline's smile brightened. It was like a light shining in her face. "That was when you were young, was n't it?"

"No," said John, grinning suddenly, "that was before I was young."

"That's enough, children," said Mrs. Bradley, and bundled them out of the room, including the Reverend Paul. She pulled her big work-basket that had stood in that room for many a day near the bed, sat down facing John, and started darning a stocking. He saw that her eyes were brown and soft with the glowing penumbra of the near-sighted. For a long time she was silently busy; then she looked up to see tears coursing down John's thin cheeks.

She gave a little gasp, dropped her work, and laid her hands on one of his. "What is the matter?" she asked, her eyes very close to his face.

John tried hard to smile. "Nothing," he said weakly. "I was only trying to think of words with which to thank you, but there's something in me so big that it can't come out in — in words; it just dribbles out of my eyes."

"My boy," said Mrs. Bradley, "don't think of it any more — not that way. If things like you did n't happen once in a while Paul and I would be broken-hearted. What would one do in a world without sickness and trouble and lonely hearts all looking for an open door? How could one be happy if these things that tie us all together were wiped out?"

The tears had dried on John's cheeks and his eyes had a gleam of mischief in them when he said, "Better look out. What about heaven?"

Mrs. Bradley was grave for a moment. "Of course," she said, "I don't know about heaven except that it will surely be right." Then she smiled and her eyes answered the gleam in his. "Shall we have a secret together, just we two? I'll tell you. Feeling as I do down here I'm not really looking forward to heaven. I'm so afraid I'll mope." They laughed softly and became friends.

In the days that followed John was gradually handed over to Pauline and the children. From little things that they let slip he gathered that the Reverend Paul and his wife, Faith, were taken up with a mountain of neglected duties that had grown like a Jack's beanstalk during the three weeks the two had been cut off from their busy life. Even so, not a morning nor an afternoon passed without his getting a glimpse of Faith and hearing at least one "Bless my soul!" from the Reverend Paul, who seemed equally astounded by the least mercies of God and by the occasional manifestations of an active devil. When he was informed by Ike that the gardener's lady pig had given birth to nine twins his "Bless my soul!" was own brother to the explosion he made when later it was announced in awestruck tones that the gentleman pig had destroyed his offspring.

A frequent visitor was Doctor McNeil, who alone seemed to think that he had no proprietary rights over John. He would go through much formality in en-

tering the room, knocking on the open door, and consulting gravely in whispers with Ike and Christine as to whether their patient was able to see him. Once, when they were alone, John complained. "You're not like a doctor at all. You never feel my pulse or ask me to stick out my tongue. You don't even take any pride in me."

"Never keep a doctor longer than you need him," said McNeil. "It's depressing. I don't come here as a doctor."

But of all the people that entered the room Pauline stood out as one who took absolute possession. It was as though she resented the white-hot courage of her father and mother in battling alone with the virulent scourge and wished to snatch her share of sacrifice in long patient hours beside the wounded. John loved her presence — while she was in the room his eyes seldom left her — but nevertheless he felt himself belittled in the knowledge that he owed her nearness entirely to his illness.

She seemed protected from familiarity beyond any human being he had ever met. He saw that to him she felt herself a nurse — a nurse to his body, to his spirit, and to his mind when it got restive with whirling in a circle. It seemed to him that she and he were two magnetic poles cut off from each other by a suspended current, and that that was why his mind whirled in a short circle as every mind must till it finds the contact that sends it on the long journey of an endless circuit.

Pauline read to him, talked to him, made him talk. He told them about his friend, Captain Ike Carr, and

rambled out long snatches of his life while Ike, feeling important at sharing a name with such a big man as the captain, perched on the edge of the bed, kicking his heels, and Christine sat in Pauline's lap, sucking her thumb and staring wide-eyed at nothing in particular until her patience was exhausted. Then she would suddenly clasp her hands together and say with an entrancingly pleading smile. "Once upon a time."

"Yes, yes," would shout Ike. "Once upon a time! Once upon a time!"

John never failed to answer that cry. He would take a child on each side of him, turn his eyes resolutely away from Pauline, and begin,

"Once upon a time there was a little boy and a little girl and they had a pony. When he was born his feet were white and he had a white streak on his nose and his mother was terrified because all her life she had heard people say,

'Four white feet and one white nose,
Chop off his head and give him to the crows.'

But before any one had time to see him she snatched him up and dipped him in a dark closet that was so dark that it was pitch-black and when she took him out he was black as night all over, only blacker."

"Blacker than midnight?" asked Ike.

"Yes," said John, "blacker than midnight. The little girl's name was Tot because she was so very little and the little boy's name was Pot because he was so very round and fat. Tot and Pot thought of a lot of names for the pony but finally they decided to call him Snowball because he was so very black.

"Snowball was a wonderful pony. He could jump as high as a house only higher, and he could stay in the air just as long as Tot and Pot could hold their breath. Sometimes he jumped twenty miles and sometimes five. When he was on the ground he could gallop so fast that Tot and Pot would be right back where they started from before they knew they had gone."

"My!" said Christine around the thumb in her mouth.

"On wash days and baking days when mother was really too busy to bother with children," continued John, "Snowball would take Tot and Pot so far that they saw lions and tigers and elephants and ant-eaters and sea-serpents and fairies and dragons, but they were n't afraid because Snowball could go so fast that he almost had to stop for the wild beasts to see him at all. Sometimes when he was thirsty he would stop long enough to make a lion's mouth water and then have a drink and run off before the lion had time to grab him.

"When he did this Tot used to laugh and clap her hands, but Pot used to whimper because he said the lion always looked just at him when his mouth was watering, and then Tot would laugh again and say, 'That's because you're so round and fat, round and fat!' This always made Pot very angry and he used to pinch Tot and she could n't pinch him back because his skin was filled so tight."

"He was a mean little boy," said Christine.

"Not *very* mean," said John. "Snowball had a very long mane and a very long tail and a forelock that

hung way down in front of his eyes. When the children quarreled he would shake his mane and his tail and his forelock and say, 'Some day you'll be sorry.'

"All the wild beasts tried very hard to catch Snowball on account of Pot being so fat but none of them could run fast enough or jump high enough, and Snowball used to laugh like a whinny every time they tried. But there was a very old dragon that could n't run or jump but he was very wise. He was so big that he could swallow an elephant without taking a glass of water to wash him down and he was so long that once he met his own tail and ate it before he felt the terrible pain and knew he was chewing on himself."

"Oh!" cried Christine, her dreamy eyes suddenly wide. "Oh!"

"He did n't mind really," proceeded John, calmly, "because it was so seldom he saw his tail that he scarcely missed it.

"This old dragon was very sly and always kept his mouth open. He had often seen Snowball and the children and every time he looked at Pot he sighed so that the children thought it was a thunderstorm coming and told Snowball to go home quickly. But one day the dragon hid all of his long body in a very great forest and laid his mouth so that it looked like a great arch over the roadway leading into the wood. He knew that Snowball often came along that way. Then the dragon shut his eyes so he would not see Pot and sigh.

"Sure enough Snowball came galloping along, shaking his forelock and his tail and his mane and saying,

‘Some day you ’ll be sorry,’ because Pot and Tot had been quarreling disgracefully. And they were sorry that very day because Snowball never saw that the great arch was the dragon’s mouth and so he galloped straight in and the wicked old dragon shut his monster jaws and they creaked so loud that the terrible screams of Tot and Pot —”

“No! No!” cried Christine, the ready tears springing from her excited eyes.

“No!” yelled Ike. “No, John!” He pounded the bed with his fists and emitted a howl that made Christine’s sobs pale to no sound at all. Even Pauline moved one hand pleadingly.

John shook the two children. “Now don’t be silly,” he said. “Did n’t I tell you that Snowball was a *wonderful* pony? Just you listen.” The children suddenly swallowed their tears.

“As I was saying,” continued John, “the wicked dragon shut his monster jaws and they creaked so loud that the terrible screams of Tot and Pot were n’t any louder than two feathers in a bed. But what happened? The minute the dragon shut his mouth it became so very dark inside that he simply could n’t find Snowball to swallow him because Snowball was as black as night only blacker. So the dragon opened his mouth just to let in a little light and quicker than a flash Snowball galloped out and even stopped to kick the dragon in each eye just to teach him a lesson.”

“Gee!” said Ike.

“Goodie!” said Christine and sighed.

“And then?” cried Ike eagerly.

“And then,” said Pauline, giving John a smile that brought her nearer to him than she had ever been before, “Tot and Pot did just what you’re going to do. They went straight to bed.”

CHAPTER XXIV

THE next day John left his room for the veranda, embowered in honeysuckle, a great climbing yellow rose, fuchsias and half a dozen flowering shrubs he could not name, all jumbled together but apparently happy. Through this curtain of leaf and bloom the gardener had cut vistas like port-holes, that looked out over the roofs of the city to the bay lying so far below that it appeared continually still, holding in its grasp dark emerald islands and little black spots of boats set sometimes in tourmaline, sometimes in amethyst and jade, sometimes in robin's-egg blue, dappled with the clouds of heaven.

Here John spun his yarns of Tot and Pot by the hour, talked with McNeil when he dropped in between professional visits, smiled when the Reverend Paul stopped to hear some bit of news and cry, "Bless my soul!" watched Pauline when occasion offered, and got well so suddenly that he was dismayed. He had to remonstrate with himself for not being ready to get well or, in plainer words, for not wanting quite yet to up anchor and leave that quiet haven.

But no one suggested by word or look that there was any reason why he should go; quite the contrary. When the evening came that he could join the family

table for supper it was made a great occasion with John as the guest of honor and Dr. McNeil as a sort of guest in-attendance.

From the hour of that meal John felt himself on a new footing of intimacy and directly subjected to influences whose strength lay in minute but constant accumulations. The effect of the force of any family circle on an intruder, whether it be for evil or good, is never suddenly measured, but such were the special conditions of John's upbringing that his entrance into the full stream of the Bradleys' home life was more in the nature of a plunge than of a gradual immersion.

When for the first time he got up from his knees after evening family prayer, done in the good old patriarchal style with gardener, servants, children, and the strangers within the gates gathered together in a homely homogeneity, his mind was promptly in a turmoil and he was conscious that he swam in a troubled tide even though he did not know whither it bore him. In the days that followed this feeling did not leave him for the simple reason that his struggle was fundamental.

While the youths of his generation in American universities had but one rule of life and that a determination to do nothing that would queer their chance for a fraternity or an upper-class club, John's student days had been strangely tinged by patronizing prattle of Auguste Comte and positivism; Spencer and the synthetic philosophy with its ethical acrobatics, morality trying to ride the essentially non-moral hobby-horse of evolution; Haeckel and the materialists; and all the

school that stands for the chaos of orthodoxy splitting itself wide open on the rock of science.

John had never had occasion to take sides. Ontologically he belonged to an epoch, to a generation that sits at the gates, ponders, discusses, and tries to disentangle the skein that led to conflict, and strike the balance of the battle in the calm of a metaphysical lull. All religion to him was an abstract and he thought of it in terms of phenomena. He was not intentionally irreligious, certainly not agnostic; he was simply the product of an atmosphere that was the direct negation of everything that the Bradleys stood for.

There was one point about the Reverend Paul that commanded immediate respect. He belonged to an old school that built its foundations broadly on the humanities, to a stalwart church that has never juggled its ministers direct from plow to pulpit. He had climbed through university as well as theological school before he considered himself fit to answer the call of God and that he had studied to some purpose in those far-off days was evidenced by the gummy and finger-blurred state of his Hebrew Bible as well as by the worn condition of his pocket Greek Testament.

While such learning is heavily discounted in the fevered erudition market of to-day, it is nevertheless true that it imparted to its adherents a rare polish like the flower of time-weathered oak and made an appeal to intellect quite apart from any considerations of creed. On this ground of a foundation deeply laid, a single subject well learned, John could meet the Reverend Paul in immediate fellowship.

More than once when he was passing the open door of the study where sat the Reverend Paul before the open Book, longing like a child at its lessons to be interrupted, he would be arrested by a sharp cough and as he paused the Reverend Paul would turn around with a sigh, suddenly smile and say, "Why, come in. Bless my soul! How time flies, eh?"

John was amused and drawn by this little comedy; he would enter the sanctum and playfully attack his host and friend, so securely entrenched behind Bible, Testament, flat-topped desk, flowing beard and gold-rimmed glasses pushed well up on a wrinkled forehead to give the twinkle in his eyes free play.

From McNeil, John had learned various things about the Bradleys and among others the main facts of the Reverend Paul's life. His great ambition had been to spend himself in the field of foreign missions, but his health had broken down and he was doomed to live on the Pacific coast or nowhere. Even here he had to be constantly under the care of a watchful physician for the missionary in him would not let him idle, and he had established a nondescript night-school and meeting place for all the rag and tag of humanity that was left behind by more specialized philanthropies. This school was a constant temptation to him to overwork. He himself appeared to be constantly on the verge of pauperism but that was only because the brother who had left him money had known him well enough to tie it up so that he could get it and give it away only in dribbles.

John was quick to realize that the Reverend Paul

was starved for congenial fellowship and thirsty for trifles of talk with a man of understanding, but he also learned that his host was bent on shunning dialectics as the devil shuns holy water. Many were John's attempts to draw him into the morass of higher criticism, to tangle him in sectarian logic, or get him to read Genesis and look at the illustrative biological plates of the History of Creation at the same time. All to no avail. At such moments the Reverend Paul's eyes would fix absently on the invisible and stay fixed till John stopped to catch breath when they would suddenly crinkle up at the corners and the Reverend Paul would say, "Let me tell you a story."

It was on such an occasion that John approached a subject that had been troubling him for some days — the matter of his board and lodging. He told the Reverend Paul that he did not wish to go away till he had somewhere to go to but that his conscience would n't let him stay on unless he was allowed to pay his way. He spoke of looking for work and, to relieve the moment of any embarrassment, plunged into a rather enthusiastic exposition of his theory that a man with two arms and a heart in him could find work anywhere.

He need not have troubled for there was no embarrassment to relieve. The Reverend Paul smiled genially and said, "Certainly you may stay on any terms you like. But, bless my soul, what an illusion! My boy, there is no work in the world; only service."

CHAPTER XXV

THE intimacy that was forming between John and Pauline developed so gradually that it was scarcely perceived before it was strong. At first John saw in it a superficial resemblance to his friendship with Joan — Pauline seemed as free as Joan had been to go and come, as fully mistress of herself, as unfettered in her frank ignoring of conventions. But soon he began to sense a difference. Pauline did not rule her parents with a careless rod of iron; she allowed herself no unrestrained liberty; she marched freely but along a road that was straight as a bee-line and fenced uncompromisingly with the thick-set hedges of right and wrong.

There was something fixed about Pauline; she was no puzzle with a trick of alternating exasperation and attraction. In the early days of his convalescence John loved to lie back with seemingly closed eyes and gaze upon her, conjuring in his mind some lovely image to fit her. He was not satisfied until he hit upon the comparison with the giant trees of the Californian coast. She was like that, a product of centuries and a century in herself. There was something infinite about those trees, an air of everlasting life, of steadfast aspiration, of perennial conquest, and an unswerving rectitude. Pauline was like that. To know it one did not have to see her whole self, standing tall, firm, sure

and beautiful; one had only to see her eyes that looked as if they could not falter.

Unlike Joan's fleeting beauty, Pauline's was never in question. It did not spring upon one with a sudden shock of discovery such as that with which the passion-flower leaps to meet the eye, but it stole in surely to the first long gaze and nestled against the senses like a single golden bloom gleaming in twilight. But it was not soft. It glowed like amber, like amber it gave an illusion of transparency, and like amber it defied any puny flame to set it on fire.

At first John had felt baffled by Pauline's impersonality and through idle pride had striven to pass its guard, but he soon gave up striving. There was something about her that made all coquetry seem mean, that not only held him back but gradually forced him to the reverence of one who humbly worships from afar. But, once he had turned his thoughts from her and from himself, drawn Ike and Christine into his arms and carried them through breathless journeys with Pot and Tot, behold a miracle! Pauline drew near in flesh and in spirit and looked kindly upon him. John alone was one thing; John with the children quite another. He saw it and his reverence did not quite keep him from profiting by the discovery.

Thus they traveled in merry company along the old road of friendship until one evening Pauline sat alone with him, near him in spirit, and was not afraid. She was a girl of few words; her life was one of movements more than of phrases. She would send a glance of her gray-blue eyes ahead, follow its lead with quick sure

action, and say nothing. But to-night she spoke; not of deep things, nor of great, but of the little familiar things of the short day. How Christine, passing a glass-paneled door, had suddenly stopped and kissed herself with never a thought of vanity. How in the garden that morning when she was picking flowers a red rose that she was passing by had clutched her dress with a thorn and made her look down.

John did not speak; he scarcely breathed lest he frighten away this shy spirit of communion. He thrilled to her low voice as he had thrilled only to Joan's arms around him and lost himself in wonder at the gifts in the hands of women. How cheap and how infinitely precious could two women make the same little thing! When first he dared a mere dream of Pauline's arms around him his face flushed a deep red and his hands trembled, but his thoughts of her, even her presence, never set him on fire. They controlled him; struck him to his knees.

The next afternoon John sought out the Reverend Paul and said, "I think it's time for me to start looking for a job,— a service, I mean."

The Reverend Paul assumed quite a new air. He seemed not to have put aside his dreary absent-minded ways so much as to have simply changed them as one changes from holiday garb to working clothes. His face lighted up with appreciation of the allusion. "Ah," he said, "that's the fine thing about service. You don't have to look for it. It comes to you. Sometimes it jumps clean onto your back like a cat onto a ball. You come with me to-night."

That evening they walked together down the long flight of steps, down the steep narrow street, turned into a rather mean quarter of the city, and soon came upon a monstrous building set in the exact middle of a large lot that boasted not a blade of grass. The building was as practical as a barn and looked like one. It was built of timber, stood four-square, a story and a half high, and had a hipped roof so that the mezzofloor could accommodate erect human beings of not over six feet in height. It was unpainted and seemed to John by far the ugliest edifice he had ever seen.

At the gate that opened into the yard the Reverend Paul stood and gazed upon the hideous structure with ecstatic pride. "We own the ground," he said with a thrill in his voice; "we own the building and some day, sir, we'll have the money to paint it!"

He led John across the yard and into the building whose ground floor was divided in the simplest possible fashion into one big room and four smaller ones, all filled with benches and the benches all filled with men and youths of every conceivable origin and grade of disreputableness.

He stopped in one room where much uncontrolled babble was going on and turned to John. "Here you are," he said, looking around with his air of suppressed astonishment. "Bless my soul, how Providence foresees our needs! You are a trained teacher and here is an entirely untrained class! You can teach them anything you like," he went on absently. "I find that the great thing is to keep them quiet."

John stared in dismay at the mess of humanity that

had been gathered in higgledy-piggledy from the streets and looked it. He drew a long breath, thought hard for a moment and then said, "Will you step outside for a moment, sir?"

As they passed out John was wondering how he could best bribe his way out of the most unpleasant bit of service ever brought to his consideration. Suddenly an idea struck him and he grinned happily. "I've got a surprise for you, sir," he said. "You'd like very much to have this building painted, would n't you?"

The Reverend Paul gazed remorsefully at his cherished schoolhouse, the monstrous apple of his eye, and said sadly, "Ah, yes. We have that to look forward to."

"Well," said John, "stop looking forward. I'll buy the paint and I'll paint it."

The Reverend Paul looked dazed. "When?" he asked, weakly.

"I'll start to-morrow," said John.

A moment later his right hand was caught in a strong grip and he looked up to see tears of gratitude gleaming in the Reverend Paul's eyes and mingling with a smile that was like the light of a rainbow shining through a shower. "My boy," he said, pumping John's hand slowly up and down, "I—I have no words—"

John felt a lump rise in his throat. "For heaven's sake, sir," he answered, "don't look like that to me. What's a little paint—a little paint—" He gave it up, tried to grin, and hurried away.

Only a week before, he had wired for money. It had come and with it on the next day he bought two

ladders, brushes, a barrel of paint, sizing, turps, and all the paraphernalia of a methodical bo's'n laying out supplies for giving his ship a fresh coat.

When he reached the house, hot and pleasantly tired, he found that to please the Reverend Paul as he had done was the sure path to making himself beloved by that most united household whose father and head was exceptionally directly connected with the family heart. Faith Bradley came nearer to him that night than she had ever been and made him feel it. Pauline deliberately led him away to walk in a little circle under the trees.

"By the way," said John to her, "I've been puzzling over something."

"What?" said Pauline.

"I've found out that Dr. McNeil knew who I was almost from the first day I came here. He made up his mind I was a seaman and went the rounds till he tracked me down. Did n't he tell you here?"

"Yes, he did," said Pauline.

"Well, then," said John, "what about that day when I was n't infectious any more and all you — you children — were brought in and presented. Do you remember? And how your father asked me to tell my name?"

"Oh," said Pauline and laughed softly. "Why, that's just father, his test."

"What do you mean?" asked John.

"Why, it's this way," said Pauline. "Father says it's our duty always to beware of frauds so he invents what he calls tests. He knows your name but you don't

know that he knows it. So he asks you what it is and if you say it right, then —”

“Then what?” asked John.

“Then he trusts you forever,” said Pauline and smiled gravely as though her thoughts were playing about the pranks of a child.

John stopped and looked at her quizzically. “Does n’t he often get left?” he asked.

“Almost always,” said Pauline. “But somehow, he himself, he never changes.”

CHAPTER XXVI

JOHN had had many occasions to watch Dr. McNeil and Pauline. How was it that these two had not been drawn together, he wondered? The doctor was young, not over thirty, and he had evidently long since won his place in the hearts of the Bradleys taken as a family, but between him and Pauline there was never close contact. Not only did they not talk together, but there was absent between them that intercourse of glances, of casual appeal on opinions, of individual consideration, that one expects to find between a young man and a girl constantly thrown together. John remembered the wall of Pauline's impersonality that at first had seemed to him impregnable, unscalable, but could not believe that the doctor could pass years before it without attempting its heights nor easily abandon the assault once begun.

The painting of the schoolhouse was no child's play and John had not undertaken the work with any illusions as to its magnitude. Single-handed, he could not hope to finish in less than a month. He was not in a hurry to lose his excuse for staying with the Bradleys, but he was eaten up with the desire of every good workman to reach the end of his task, to put on those finishing touches which are the satisfying crown on labor well done.

In order that he might save time and a laborious daily climb he began carrying his lunch with him in the mornings, until Pauline came to him one day with a puzzled look in her gray-blue eyes. "I don't understand," she said, "why you work so hard. Dr. McNeil says you're not strong enough to drive yourself, and besides, what's the use of working so fast that you can't enjoy it?"

Dr. McNeil walked across to where they were talking. "That's quite right," he said, making no excuses for having listened. "I've been going to make a suggestion. Come to my place for lunch. There's no hill to climb and most days I'm alone."

John glanced at Pauline, but the doctor kept his eyes unwaveringly on John with a sort of insistence that seemed to plead and demand an answer at the same time.

"Why not?" said John. "I'd be glad to."

He was never to forget the accumulated impression of those lunch hours nor of the doctor's house. It was a pretentious house for a bachelor, large, solid, standing in two acres of beautifully kept grounds, and struck a note hard to fix in words, a tone half way between affluence and opulency. This tone seemed to run like a color-scheme through the doctor and all his belongings.

In spite of this general fitness of things the house itself seemed eloquent of something missing. John wondered vaguely what it could be. The air that hung about the house was the same as that which occasionally seemed to hang about McNeil, an air not of sadness exactly, but of finality as though the house and its owner

had expected some one, waited, and at last given up waiting.

McNeil was a finished host. In overalls or in mufti, John never felt anything but at home at the solid square table set for two that welcomed him daily with its snowy white cloth and gleaming cutlery. It seemed to seize on his senses and hold them without effort for a restful hour.

McNeil could talk. He was a rapid but desultory reader, not of books for he seldom had the time for them, but of all that transient literature which to-day enables a busy man to keep step with the van of discovery and thought. Like John, he was a modern, the by-product of an age and an atmosphere, one of the vast army who are avidly waiting for the new cosmos of the mind to crystallize into a *credo*, who stand midway between the ethical norms of "I know," and "I believe."

In conversation his face would lose its habitual solemnity, his eyes would light up, and he would speak quickly and briefly, going straight to kernel or crux. But when one day John drew him back from general topics and suddenly presented the Bradleys for consideration, a shadow like a cloud darkened his face for a moment, only to clear as he spoke. "So," he said, "you're trying to think out the Bradleys. Keep on trying if you're in a hurry, but when you give up, come to me and I'll show them to you through a clear glass."

About the time the painting of the schoolhouse was half done, an evening came when the children were in bed, the Reverend Paul, Faith Bradley, and the serv-

ants gone to prayer-meeting or elsewhere, and Pauline left with John to watch over the house. They sat in silence on the veranda in the glow of half-light from the open front door.

It was easy to be silent on that veranda, it was so high, so free of the clatter of traffic and the sounds of men. The lights of a great city builded upon hills blinked up out of the depths of earth and from the depths of the heavens that seemed almost as near, the myriad stars blinked back. From such a point of vantage one could send one's thoughts easily up or down, reaching like a searchlight across space.

But John's eyes did not seek earth and heaven so far away. They settled on Pauline, played on her as though they dared caresses upon which his hands would never venture. She sat relaxed in her chair, her hands lying along its arms, her head fallen slightly back, and her eyes looking neither up nor down but wide open with unfathomable thoughts. Where was she? John wondered, for he could see that she was far away. He did not flush nor turn his eyes as he had from Joan, lying asleep, because here was no exposure, no subtle attack on the senses. Absent or present in spirit, Pauline was protected.

Yet immobile, silent, she spoke to him, moved him more deeply than had any mood of Joan's. The glimmering gold of her hair, the faint blush in her cheeks, the creamy white of her throat where he could see the beat of her pulse, all seemed to him to shine with the subdued glow of light striving through amber and made

her adorable from afar to his eyes, infinitely desirable to his heart.

Gradually he felt an aching arising within him, a longing such as he had never known, to draw near to her and draw her near to him. This throbbing in his heart, this breathing in short gasps that hurt, were no illusory will-o'-the-wisp dragging him into a morass of fear. He knew it. He knew that with Pauline marriage would have no terrors beyond the awe of reverence, no thoughts or speculations of how and where to live. To be with her would be life; to serve her would be to serve heaven and earth. Where she was, there was a whole world, self-contained, infinite in its promise that love, once given and taken, would mount steadfastly to unmeasurable heights.

But how to waken her? How to reach her? His heart sank with a premonition of failure. If only she would give him one conscious glance, one faint pressure of her hand, one little betraying sigh! He watched her with an intensity born of his desire. Now was the time. How could he wait? His lips were so dry he wet them lest they be impotent to speak at need. Fever was in his hands and made them tremble so that he clutched the arms of his chair to keep them still.

A voice, the Reverend Paul's voice, floated up to them. Presently they heard the sound of feet climbing the long flight of steps. Pauline came back to herself. "Is it possible it's so late?" she said. "I hear them coming."

John sprang up so quickly that his chair rasped on

the veranda floor. "Before they come," he said thickly, "say good night — while we're alone."

Pauline's breath seemed to catch and pause. She rose to her feet, held out her hand vaguely. He clutched it. She could feel the fever in his hand; in spite of its grip, it trembled. Her unfaltering eyes suddenly fixed on his face in a conscious gaze.

"Say good night," he whispered hoarsely.

Her lips formed the word inaudibly. John dropped her hand, turned his face from her, and hurried into the house lest he betray his sudden exaltation. His eyes glowed, his blood surged in his veins, his breath came in long quivering sighs. She was awake, cried his soul. He had said nothing, done nothing, only asked her to say good night before they came — the others — and she herself had suddenly awakened to find her lips mute.

CHAPTER XXVII

TWO weeks passed and John was putting the finishing touches to the schoolhouse before the busy communal life of the Bradleys gave him another chance to be alone with Pauline, but he did not count the days as lost for during them he had seen her draw slowly out of herself like a bud shy of the weather waiting only for one more blaze of sunshine to warm it to bloom. Where once she had been merely detached, now she was pensive and occasionally her eyes would brood over John when she thought he was not looking, wander to Dr. McNeil, and back again to John.

It was a drowsy Saturday afternoon that brought him his opportunity. Ike and Christine had been carried off to a children's party, Faith Bradley was taking a nap, and the Reverend Paul was restlessly grinding out a sermon. Pauline and John had been to the foot of the long flight of steps to hand over the children to their hostess, waiting there in her carriage. When they had climbed the steps again, John led the way to a bench under the trees.

"Do you mind sitting here for a little while?" he asked.

Something in the tone of his voice made Pauline pause; then she looked at him squarely and said, "No, I don't mind."

He sat on the edge of the bench and leaned toward

her. "Do you remember the other night?" he asked, "the night that I asked you to say good night and you could n't — not out loud?"

Pauline's eyes were fixed on the bay far below. "Yes," she said. "I remember."

"We had sat the whole evening without saying a word," went on John. "I don't know where you were. You were out somewhere far away between the lights of the city and the stars, so far that I thought nothing I could do would bring you back. But I was there, all of me was there, hovering around you, brushing your cheeks with my thoughts, caressing your hair with my eyes, longing just to touch my lips to your feet, my whole self aching to come near to you, to stay near to you for always."

Pauline's breath came fast, her lips parted, and she turned her eyes, troubled with sudden questionings, from the bay to his face.

John gripped his hands between his knees and looked intently at her. "Shall I tell you that I'll love you forever? Where's the use in that? I can't paint your power in words. You alone know the depths of the thing that's in you. All I know is what I feel and what I believe, that if I were struck blind my eyes would still live in the memory of your face, that if I were suddenly deaf just my hand against your heart would give me back all the music in the world."

Pauline raised her hand to her breast and pressed it there as though to hide the beating of her heart. "Don't," she said, with a catch of her breath. "Don't go on — not like that."

John felt his blood leap exultantly. He caught her free hand and held it tightly. "Why should n't I go on?" he said. "Go on? Why, Pauline, I have n't begun. What have I said? Nothing. The things I feel, how can I tell them? Only in years, only in serving you, only —" He dropped his head and laid his hot face in her hand.

For a moment she let her hand rest against his cheek; then she drew it softly away. "Sit up," she said. "Sit close to me. I can't let you go on, not till I've told you where I stand."

John did as she bade him, but would not be content to listen until he held both her hands in his. "Now," he said, his face quivering but still exultant, "now tell me."

"It's a thing I don't know how to tell very well," said Pauline. "Something I was never able to tell mother and that she could never ask. It was when I was just going to be married. It seems so long ago but it was n't very long ago, only a year."

She paused and let her thoughts travel far back. "He was a good man, a fine man; he's been a fine man ever since I've known him. Unhappy sometimes but not afraid. He came to me like a great light and showed me that I was a woman, not suddenly so that I was frightened but slowly, like morning coming. And when the thing happened and he saw that I could n't tell mother, that mother's heart and mine were aching because my tongue was tied, he went to her himself and told her, because he is never afraid."

"What was this terrible thing?" asked John, press-

ing her hands, trying to bring back her thoughts to himself.

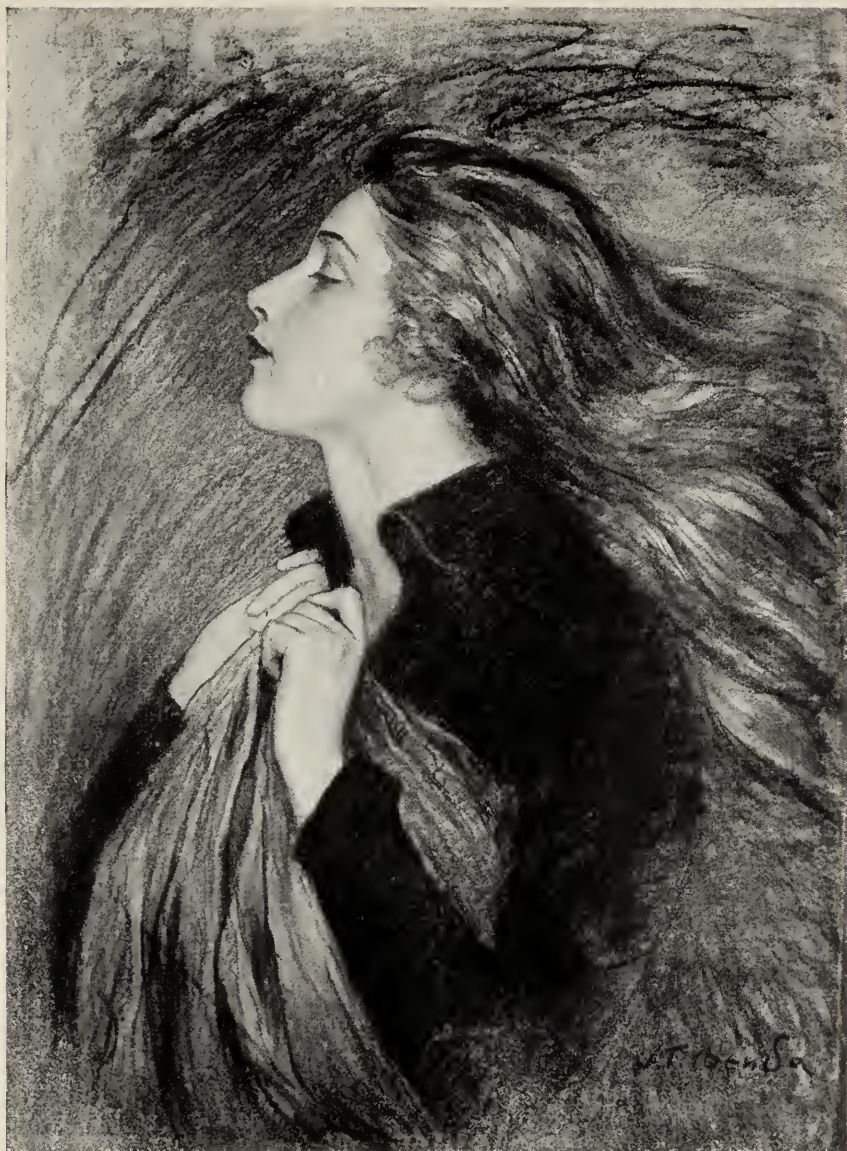
Pauline turned her troubled eyes on his face. They steadied as they met his gaze. "It's not so hard for me to tell you as I thought it would be," she said, "because it's right I should tell you. Before we were to be married he brought me here, one afternoon just like this, and told me that although he had never been married he had a boy, a son. That was the thing and that was the end — for us."

For a moment the reaction threatened to be too much for John. What he had expected he did not know but he felt a sudden desire to smile as though at an anticlimax, to laugh away Pauline's tragic note. He looked into her face and suddenly all desire to smile left him. He felt a vague disquiet that he could not quite place; she was so young, yet so austere; so innocent of knowledge, yet so uncurious, immutable.

"But Pauline," he almost stammered, trying to smile. "You don't mean —"

Her eyes were steadily fixed on his face. "Don't mean what?" she asked.

"You don't mean that if you loved a man and he was honorable with you — You don't mean that if a man has ever had a woman in his life, a woman that never counted — You don't —" He floundered to a full stop. As he had spoken so had his color been rising in plunges to his cheeks. He wondered how he could ever have felt like smiling at the tragedy in Pauline's voice. His face was drawn, his eyes feverish but



PAULINE

not impelling, as though they feared to have his unfinished question answered.

Pauline paid no heed to his words; her gaze remained fixed on his face, reading it as though it were a printed page. Suddenly a tremor went through her whole body; the gray blue of her eyes turned to steel. She slowly drew her hands away from his grasp and clenched them in her lap. "You, too," she said steadily, coldly, as if something had gone dead within her.

John's heart sank lower and lower as he looked at her; his limbs and his whole body felt a sudden chill as though ice were running in his veins, but he forced his lips to a crooked smile. "Pauline," he said, "you don't mean, you *can't* mean, that you'd let the dead acts of a man's past cut him — and you — off from happiness?"

She was no longer looking at him. Her eyes were fixed straight before her. "Our acts die with us, sometimes," she said; "never before."

"And a thing like that, no matter how long ago or how it happened," pleaded John; "no matter how much you loved the man —"

"However much I loved him," said Pauline, steadily.

John leaned forward, his face tense and his eyes glowing. "What about expiation?" he said sharply. "Is there no expiation for a thing like that?"

Pauline turned her eyes on him for a mere glance, her lip curled infinitesimally, she swallowed twice in rapid succession, and caught her breath. Then she

looked away. "Expiation?" she said steadily. "Yes, there is expiation."

"You mean," said John, hoarsely, an impotent rage rising in him, "you mean there is atonement but no reward?"

"None," said Pauline. "Not here."

Suddenly he sprang to his feet. "Stand up," he commanded. "Look at me."

Pauline rose to her feet and looked steadily into his eyes. "What is it?" she asked patiently.

"This," said John, passionately. "Some day you will meet a cad instead of a man and he will lie to you."

Pauline's unfaltering eyes held him firmly for a long moment and a faint flush rose slowly to her pale cheeks. "You are wrong," she said quietly. "You know you are wrong. No man will ever lie to me."

Before her steady gaze his eyes fell. He turned and stumbled toward the house, blind with rage and protest, helpless and bruised as though he had come to grips with Fate itself. The Reverend Paul called to him as he passed the open door of the study but he did not heed. He rushed to his room, closed the door, locked it, and paced up and down, his fists pressed to his temples. Then he threw himself full length, face down, on the bed and tried to think; tried to be sane and trace his utter despair and the sickening feeling of impotence back along the years to its far-off ugly source, back to his childhood and the Mansini woman.

What was it Pauline had said? Our acts die with us sometimes, never before. The desire that still ached within him cried out that it was a lie. But what if it

were true? Where would the world be if people picked out a little rock like that and built a whole life on it? Justice without charity, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, love abased before even scales, lowered to a level of trade and weight for weight. It could not be.

An hour passed. He got up and went to the window. Already the whole catastrophe seemed impossible, like the memory of a nightmare. He held aside the curtain and looked out toward the bench beneath the trees. Some one was sitting there. Pauline, alone, lovely as a garden statue in twilight, immutable and cold as stone, her hands clenched in her lap and her eyes fixed before her.

CHAPTER XXVIII

JOHN did not leave his room for the rest of the afternoon. He busied himself arranging his few belongings so that he could pack them at a moment's notice and on a slip of paper jotted down each little thing that he had yet to do to leave his job of painting absolutely complete. Since he had stared out of the window at Pauline, sitting so still on the bench where they had talked, a strange calmness had settled upon him, not peace of spirit but the dead quiet of abandonment. There was a fixity about that figure of a girl that killed hope.

He felt an impulse to avoid the supper table but quelled it and took his place promptly, his lips set in a grim, straight line. His thoughts were fixed with dread on the Sunday that was to follow, a long empty day whose terrors could not be stilled by work. Well, he would run away from it; he would go and bury himself in McNeil's house, and make no excuses. Only once during the meal did his eyes glance at Pauline. She was no longer pensive; she was apparently serene and wore that air of detachment that John had grown to connect invariably with the presence of McNeil. Was the same barrier raised now against himself? If so, then McNeil was the man who had crashed first on the little rock!

He awoke from the speculations to which that thought gave rise to find Mrs. Bradley's soft eyes fixed anxiously on his face. She leaned toward him as she did toward any one to whom she spoke. "You are not well," she said. "Your holiday has n't rested you."

John forced himself to smile. "No," he said. "Work's the cure for me. Wait till Monday. I'll show you."

The next morning he left a note to say that he would be out for the day and walked straight to the doctor's house. McNeil was surprised to see him, and the havoc that had been worked in John's face by the turmoil of the preceding afternoon and a sleepless night made the doctor jump to the conclusion that his early visitor came as patient and not as friend.

"Well, well," he said with a smile of professional cheer, "come into the office and tell me all about it."

John shook his head. "No," he said grimly. "There's nothing wrong with the flesh this time. I just want to hide myself, bury myself in your library for the day. Do you mind?"

"No," said McNeil, gravely. "You don't want to talk?"

John shook his head again. "Not just now," he said.

But in the late afternoon when they were smoking together on the tree-shaded veranda at the side of the house, he gave the doctor an inkling of his trouble. "McNeil," he said, "you've been a mighty good friend to me. I want you to know that I'll never forget all you've done. To-morrow I finish my painting job.

After that will you take me in for a day or two? Something's gone wrong in my head and my heart at the same time. I want to break away." He tried to smile to pass off his flippant words but failed miserably.

McNeil was embarrassed as are most men before emotion. "My dear fellow," he said, getting up and pretending to fix his attention on something in the garden. "Of course. I'll do anything. But won't it make it awkward for the Bradleys? I know they've done nothing to make you feel unwelcome —"

"Unwelcome!" exclaimed John.

"I know," said McNeil. "Did n't I say I knew they had n't. Well, never mind. Don't say another word. I'm not such a fool as not to know that there are times when just to do one thing is so big that you can't stop to think of the little things that are going to happen along with it. And as for telling me all that's in your heart — You're worrying about that, are n't you? Well, don't. Light is n't always kind. Before you start to tell me anything, I'm going to show you something; one of those chance discoveries that give tongues to inanimate things."

He called a servant and spoke to him aside, then he said to John, "Come with me."

They left the veranda and walked in silence half across the grounds. Suddenly McNeil stopped and turned. "Look at the house," he said.

John was bewildered by the strange command but obeyed. For a moment his eyes were aware of no change, but as he stared he became puzzled and gradually amazed. The house appeared the same in every

detail as he had always known it but its whole air was transformed and it seemed to breathe a harsh dissonance. He searched long for the discordant note and at last found it in the turret that rose high above one corner of the large building. The windows of the tower were unveiled, revealing its emptiness. The eye passed through them unhindered and beyond to flat squares of sky.

The open turret glared its emptiness to the whole world. It was like a sore and a blemish, a shell of ruin unconsecrated by grandeur, an eerie so bare that it would repel the birds of the air. It made the whole house seem mean, deserted, unloved, shallowly crying out its troubles to any passer-by.

McNeil clapped his hands and immediately a hand and an arm stretched out across the emptiness of the turret and drew one heavy curtain after another. There was no longer a discordant note. The house returned into itself, took on a sudden dignity of steadfast silence and containment. It became inscrutable, neither joyful nor blatant of its woes. It seemed to say, "Here I stand. Make of me what you will."

The two men stood long gazing at the sealed turret, each busy with his own thoughts. It was John who broke the silence. "You could never imagine a thing like that," he said with a deep breath. "You have to see it."

"Both," said McNeil, thoughtfully. "You have to see it and imagine it. Until I happened by a fluke on what you've just seen, I never knew the strength of containment."

CHAPTER XXIX

THE next day John carried his lunch with him but did not stop work to eat it. By a little after four in the afternoon he had put the last finishing touch to a most creditable job. He gathered all his working materials, the ladders, the empty barrels and paint pots, the worn brushes and the seamanlike tackle with which he had avoided the use of scaffolding, and stacked the lot methodically in one corner of the schoolyard. With a last look around he left the scene of his happy month of labor and made his way to the Bradleys' house, bathed, changed his clothes, and packed in readiness for the morrow. Then he sought out the Reverend Paul and found him in his study, talking to his wife.

"Well," said John, "my job's done and I've no longer got a right to saddle myself on you. I would thank you for everything but I can't. I've tried before but there are n't any words —"

"Bless my soul!" interrupted the Reverend Paul. "Finished to-day, have you? Splendid. Splendid. Faith, tell Ike to try and find my hat. I really must go down and look. For a week I've been shutting my eyes every day so as to see the whole thing suddenly, and yesterday I bumped into two children and, if you can believe it, almost knocked them down." He looked

at his wife and John with his usual astonishment at little things.

"Paul, dear," said Mrs. Bradley, "did you hear? Mr. Bogardus says he's going away, that he can't saddle himself on us any longer."

"Nonsense!" cried the Reverend Paul. "Does he think we're tame donkeys that can't kick him off when we're tired of him? Nonsense!" He called to Pauline as she passed the open door. "Pauline, come here and talk to this young man. He says he's going away. Think of something else for him to paint."

Pauline smiled, not at John but at her father. "I can't think of anything just now," she said.

"I have it," cried the Reverend Paul. "We'll put up a windmill. Ours is a splendid location for a windmill."

"But, darling papa," said Pauline, "we don't need a windmill. What would we do with a windmill?"

"That's true," said the Reverend Paul, frowning and tapping his desk with his fingers. "I hadn't thought of that."

"Here's your hat, dear," said Mrs. Bradley.

The Reverend Paul took the hat absently and put it on. Before he could remember what he wanted it for, Ike and Christine rushed in and attacked John in massed formation. "Once upon a time!" they cried in chorus. "Please! Please!"

They led him out to a corner of the veranda and, before they had decided just where and how to settle down, Pauline came out to them with a thick roll of manuscript in her hand. She gave it to John. "If

you ever need money," she said, "try these on some publisher. It's just your Pot and Tot stories. I've written them out almost in your own words."

John took the bundle and thrust it in his pocket. "Thank you," he said, his voice thick with resentment and futile protest. He turned from her and she was about to leave them, when the children seized on her skirts and dragged her to a seat between them on a wicker lounge. "Now!" they said to John, still in chorus.

He sat down in a chair before them, a grim look about his mouth and eyes. Outwardly he was tired by the day's hard work, inwardly he was bruised and sore, and, as though to touch him on the raw, the children had drawn close to Pauline instead of nestling down beside him as was their wont when Tot and Pot were about to make an appearance.

"Once upon a time—" said John and paused.

"There were a little boy and a little girl and their names were Pot and Tot!" chanted Ike and Christine.

"Exactly," said John. "This boy Pot was n't a perfect little boy by any means. In the first place he was fat, in the second place he was greedy, and in the third place he used to pinch Tot because he knew she could n't pinch back. Pot and Tot had a pony—"

"And his name was Snowball because he was so black!" cried Christine and clapped her hands.

"Yes," said John, "that was his name, all right. Snowball was a wonderful pony, but just because he was so wonderful he had an awful quarrel with the children. It all started from the day Pot made a but-

terfly net. When the net was made he ran after butterflies but he never caught one because he was so fat he could n't run any faster than a steak-and-kidney pudding. The butterflies simply laughed at him, called him Fatty, and made him so angry that he turned purple and white in spots with rage."

"Poor Pot," said Christine.

"Poor Pot?" continued John. "Wait till you hear what he did. He climbed on Snowball, who was so wonderful that he could jump as high as a house only higher, and made him jump after the butterflies. Every time Snowball jumped Pot caught a butterfly, and pretty soon all the butterflies stopped laughing, I can tell you, and never called him Fatty any more.

"At first Tot did n't want to catch butterflies because when Pot caught them he did n't let them go again but pinned each one with a long long pin into a board and puffed his cheeks and his eyes out and called it a collection. But one day a man with a head shaped like a potato with a bad spot at one end and wearing thick glasses came along and for just one little butterfly he gave Pot a big quarter of a dollar. When Tot saw that she forgot all about being sorry for the butterflies and made herself a net and even took a penny from her church money to buy some long pins."

"Oh!" cried Christine.

"Yes," said John. "It was naughty. It was so naughty that it just shows you how naughty a little girl can be. All this made Snowball very sad, because he loved the gentle butterflies. At last it just grew to be too much for him, and though he knew he must do

everything his masters told him to do he could n't jump high any more because his heart was so heavy it simply held him down and even almost broke his legs with its weight."

"Gee!" said Ike. "It musta been awful heavy."

"It was," said John. "It was even heavier than Pot, and Pot was the fattest boy ever put into one skin. The first time poor Snowball could n't jump when Pot told him to, Pot got very angry and beat him. That made Snowball's heart grow heavier than ever and his legs could n't hold it up any longer so they just crumpled and let Snowball down in the grass. 'Well,' he thought, 'it's all for the best because now the butterflies are safe.'

"But he was wrong, for that very day the man with a head like a potato with a bad spot at one end came along and told Pot never mind about his lazy pony, because if he went into the woods and found the butterflies when they were young and sticky and had n't quite learned to fly, he could walk right up to them and catch them with his fingers. So every day Pot and Tot would go out together and catch poor young butterflies that were just beginning to dry their wings. They caught so many that one day the king of the butterflies, an emperor moth, called a great meeting —"

"Was there a queen, too?" asked Christine.

"Yes, there was a queen," said John, "but she was prostrated with grief. That was one of the reasons the king called the meeting. When all the butterflies were assembled it was a beautiful sight but very hard to see, because they gathered just under the tops of the

highest trees. All was very quiet because even when the whole multitude of butterflies talked at the same time it did n't make any more noise than two feathers in a bed. When the king shouted, 'This meeting is called to decide what to do about Pot and Tot!' the proclamation had to be repeated a million times for all the butterflies to hear."

"My!" said Ike.

"All the councilors of state," continued John, "the king's chamberlains and nobles, the thousand ladies-in-waiting and the ten-thousand ladies-of-the-wardrobe, the knights, which we call moths, the fifty thousand heralds, and all the princes and princesses of the many royal families chattered a hundred thousand different things, but all the young butterflies that could not fly and were just hanging on the branches and trunks of the trees said just one thing and they said it all together so that it drowned out all the other things that everybody else was saying."

"What did they say?" asked Ike.

"This is what all the sticky young butterflies shouted," said John. "They shouted, 'Kill Pot, kill Tot, kill Tot, kill Pot!'"

"They were angry," said Christine mildly.

"Very angry," said John. "And just when they were angriest who should come into the wood but Pot and Tot, and Pot looked up and when he saw the millions and millions of butterflies, his little round mouth opened in wonder and his eyes stuck out from his round cheeks with greed. This made one of the young butterflies so angry that he loosened his hold on the branch

of a tree and hurled himself at Pot, screaming at the top of his perfectly silent voice, 'Kill Pot, kill Tot, kill Tot, kill Pot!'

"When the other young butterflies saw that, they hurled themselves down, first just a few, then more and more. Pot laughed with glee and told Tot to hold out her apron. He caught butterflies so fast that he forgot all about not breaking their wings, and started cramming them in his pockets. But soon he stopped catching them. They no longer were coming in dozens and baker's dozens, but in dozens and baker's dozens of hundreds of thousands!

" 'Pot,' screamed Tot, 'I'm frightened!'

" 'Huh!' grunted Pot, 'whose afraid of butterflies?' He threw his arms around and beat off as many as he could, but the very young ones were so sticky they just hung to him like molasses. In spite of the way he was fighting he began to turn pale and cold. Then he knew he was frightened. 'Run, Tot, run!' he shouted and Tot answered, 'Oh, Pot, I *can't*. They are sticking to my arms and legs. They're sticking to me *all over*. Oh, Po —'

"Suddenly her voice stopped. The butterflies had filled her mouth. Just after that Pot saw her go down. He fought on a little longer and then he too went down squashing thousands of butterflies with his fat, round body. But the thousands that he squashed were nothing to the millions and millions that were left and that piled on top of Pot and Tot in a mountain as big as a house and of all the colors in the world. For some time the mountain quivered and shook once in a while

but soon it was quite still and all through the air, under the trees, on the trees, over the trees, wherever the eye could reach, there was a great thick cloud of butterflies, all singing one terrible song: 'Pot is dead, Tot is dead; Tot is dead, Pot is dead.' "

"But they were n't," said Ike.

"Of course they were n't," murmured Christine.

"Snowball heard the terrible song," continued John, "and he was so terrified that he forgot all about his heart being too heavy to carry and came flying like the wind. He hurled himself at the great mountain of butterflies and with his head and his tail and all his four feet he scattered it right and left until at last he had quite uncovered the two children, Pot lying so fat and round and unnaturally pale and poor, poor little Tot, just as white and as flat and as still as a wet sheet of paper. Great tears rolled down from Snowball's eyes for he saw that he had come too late."

Ike's and Christine's eyes were fastened on John's mouth, waiting for him to go on. "Too late," prompted Ike.

"Yes," said John. "He was too late. The butterflies were right. Pot and Tot had killed them; they had killed Pot and Tot."

The children's eyes went wide with horror, they stared unbelieving at John's set face. Christine was the first to break. She caught her breath in a sharp little gasp and then screamed, "*No!*" so sharply, so penetratingly, that the word shot through John's heart. Ike pounded the side of the wicker seat. "No, John, no!" he yelled and suddenly burst into tears.

Pauline, very pale, rose to her feet. The children flung themselves at her, clutched at her blindly, buried their faces against her skirt, and sobbed. "Change it," she said to John. "Change it *now*, quickly."

John found himself standing, facing her. "I can't," he said. "I won't."

"Why?" said Pauline, amazement in her eyes.

"Justice," said John. "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a Pot for a butterfly —"

"But children!" blazed Pauline. "You hurt children?"

"Let them learn now," said John, his feverish eyes flashing. "Let them see justice trample on love while they're children. It won't hurt them — hurt them so — later." He turned abruptly from her.

"Wait!" cried Pauline. She leaned over and comforted the children. "There, there, darlings, it's only a story. Just keep thinking of that. It never really happened."

She led them still sobbing toward the door just as Mrs. Bradley hurried out to see what was the matter. "Take them, mother, please take them," said Pauline and turned back to John. For a long moment they stood silent, searching each other's faces; then Pauline raised her hand to her breast and pressed it against her throbbing heart. "What are you doing?" she asked, her low voice vibrating. "What are you trying to do? Don't you see — can't you see —"

"What?" cried John, a sudden gleam in his eyes.

Pauline shook her head slowly from side to side. "No,— no," she said. "Can't you see? If you per-

suade me, even if you could persuade me, who do you think would profit? You or the man who first came to me like — like light in the morning?"

There was a sudden flash of understanding in John's eyes; then they went quite dead, his face turned pale, and his shoulders dropped. He was dumb. With a motion of his hand he turned from her and went to his room. To his amazement, rage did not possess him. Against all reason he found that he was not thinking of himself; he was thinking with a sort of stunned wonder, not of Pauline but of this thing that was greater than Pauline. In that moment she loomed before him in a new aspect. She did not govern nor was she governed; she was established. Even in defeat and in abnegation she could surrender to no man but to justice.

CHAPTER XXX

JUST before the supper hour John stole from his room and went to the door of the children's nursery. He met Mrs. Bradley coming out. "Are they asleep?" he asked.

"No," she said, her mouth twitching and her eyes avoiding him. "They would n't eat their supper and I could n't make them say their prayers. I've put them to bed. They're quiet but they're still crying a little. Could n't you —?"

"Of course I can," said John. "Please let me go in."

He entered the room and closed the door softly behind him. Ike and Christine lay with their backs toward each other, curled up in two little twin beds. They were both clinging to their pillows and crying softly with spasmodic jerks as though the machinery of tears had almost run down.

"Children!" whispered John.

They looked up quickly, swallowing their sobs. "What?" said Ike, and Christine tried to speak but only made a funny noise in her throat.

John put his finger on his lips and looked mysteriously over his shoulder. "Hush," he said. "If I tell you a secret about Pot and Tot will you promise never, never to tell — never until to-morrow?"

"Not mother?" whispered Christine.

"Ner Pauline?" asked Ike.

"Never till to-morrow," said John.

"I promise," said Ike. Christine, her eyes very wide, nodded her head.

John picked her up, sat down on the edge of Ike's bed, and took her on one knee. Ike quickly clambered to the other. John put his arms around their soft warm bodies and drew them close, pressing their heads against his face. Their cheeks were wet and they still caught their breath occasionally in quivering sniffs.

"You know the terrible time Pot and Tot had with the butterflies?" began John.

Both children nodded their heads emphatically. "Well," said John, "it all happened at night, one night after a day when Pot and Tot had been very naughty. They had killed one teeny weeny butterfly and they had climbed into the pantry and eaten a lot of brown sugar. Pot had eaten twenty-two lumps and Tot had eaten seventeen. And so it just served them right when they had that awful nightmare about being killed by butterflies."

"And they weren't really truly killed?" asked Christine hopefully.

"Of course not," said John. "A nightmare frightens you terribly and makes you cry but it never quite kills you. It only teaches you a lesson."

"Nightmares is bad dreams," said Ike, pensively.

Gradually the great and joyful fact that Pot and Tot still lived soaked into the children's minds. Christine gave a happy gasp and clasped her hands; Ike jumped

up and down on John's knee and chanted, "They jest dreamed it! They jest dreamed it!"

John gripped the two little bodies firmly and began slowly counting their ribs with searching, tickling fingers. The children giggled and a moment later a double shriek of treble laughter rang through the house.

At the supper table the Reverend Paul, Faith Bradley, and Pauline had been sitting for some time, patiently waiting for John to take his place. The Reverend Paul had cast questioning glances at his wife's troubled face, at Pauline's moist eyes and quivering lips, and had caught the general depressing atmosphere. He sat frowning and tapping the table with his fingers.

At the double peal of laughter from the nursery the cloud on his brow lifted and cleared before the women folk had time to realize what was happening. His face broke into a smile and then suddenly took on its look of astonishment, his eyes filled with happy tears. He hastily took off his blurred glasses, started polishing them with his napkin, and cried, "Bless my soul!"

John had appeared in the doorway of the dining-room, bearing a child on each arm, pink feet just peeping from below white but sadly crumpled nighties. "A very hungry young lady," he said, "and a very hungry young man."

"Oh, dear," said Mrs. Bradley, looking at the children's excited eyes, "they'll never go to sleep again!"

"Oh, yes, they will," said John. "Just as soon as you fill their hollow places. But *not* with lumps of brown sugar."

“Shsh!” cried Christine excitedly, putting one hand over John’s mouth.

He kissed her fingers as he dropped her into Pauline’s lap and then handed Ike over to his mother.

“What’s he been telling you, dear?” asked Mrs. Bradley.

Ike laughed excitedly. “Can’t tell,” he said. “It’s a secret.

“Can’t tell never,” said Christine; “never till tomorrow.”

John got his full reward for bringing about that happy scene when he said his almost wordless farewell on the following morning. Whatever he himself had suffered was robbed of harsh poignancy by the unveiled love of the hearts that had welcomed him so warmly and that now grieved so frankly over his departure. The children cried and would not be comforted, Mrs. Bradley kissed him; the Reverend Paul put on his hat and took it off several times absently and his eyes wandered sadly around as though they tried in vain to find a silver lining to the cloud that had settled on the household. He murmured “Bless my soul!” once or twice but with no enthusiasm. Pauline, above all, was kind. She said nothing but she held John’s hand long and let him see two tears well in her eyes and crawl unheeded down her cheeks.

In those tears he saw her strength, humbled, paying tribute; her cold rectitude warming and belying itself to the pain in her heart. They gave him a mute assurance that he had laid his touch on her innermost self, that though he had not shaken he had moved her,

that even in losing her he had won much, and that come what might, her memory of him was woven too deep into the woof of life ever to be cast out and quite forgotten.

John made his way to McNeil's house in a strange mood. He did not know it, but in that hour the assurance of his youth, face to face with life, began to wane. For the first time he sensed, though vaguely, the duality of a man's existence; the parallel planes, upon one of which he floats, dreams, and aspires, and upon the other of which he actually walks, groping, stubbing his toes, bumping his head, and bruising himself against the concrete ordinations of a predestined course.

With the perception of this duality came a still deeper understanding, a consciousness of that correlation of the spirit and the flesh which holds behind its veil the mystery of the will. However blindly a man's will drives the spirit, however blindly it is driven by material things, it still links his grosser to his finer self in a single fate, holds plane to plane, welds the two into the sum of being, and saves him from the dead ashes of an absolute predestination.

John wrinkled his brow, striving to follow this double road around the rock of fatalism, but wherever he sent his thoughts they doubled back constantly to Pauline and the new aspect on life that she had so suddenly presented to his view. As he looked back on her even from that near distance in time and space she no longer seemed to stand alone; she was molded into the life about her and into the family group. To see her, to

understand her, one had to see the Reverend Paul, Faith Bradley, and even Christine and Ike.

John remembered what McNeil had said to him. "When you give up trying to think out the Bradleys, come to me and I'll show them to you through a clear glass." He made up his mind to remind the doctor of his promise.

"I've been thinking hard on the Bradleys for hours," he found occasion to say that night when the two were sitting together on the veranda after dinner, "and of what you said the other day."

McNeil studied the ash on his cigar and flicked it off. "Well?" he asked, after a long pause.

"I have n't got very far," said John, his brows puckered. "I only know that to the heart they are all tenderness, warmth, lovingkindness; and to the mind a subtle contradiction of all that is soft and pliable. You approach them without fear, they welcome you with the graciousness of those who live only to give, but when you would strike deep and move them you find you can only clutch and cling. That frightens you. There's a terror about anything immutable, even if it's an unmerciful but righteous God. Anything that's absolutely unswerving, consistently just, strikes fear into my heart —"

"And into mine," interrupted McNeil.

"It — it is n't right," finished John, weakly.

"It's puzzling," said McNeil. He watched the glow of his cigar in silence until it dimmed and turned gray under the ash. "You've gone a long way with the

Bradleys," he continued, "but you've gone only half way."

He paused again and frowned. "A generation or a couple of generations ago," he resumed, "the climax of a young man's growth was generally marked by a religious upheaval in his insides. His great fight was on the issue of belief and his relations to accepted creed. He lived in a metaphysical atmosphere electrically charged with doubt. I don't suppose the history of the mind has witnessed any more poignant struggles than took place and still take place on that battlefield. But to-day things are different. Ethics in the sense of tenets are no longer the main obsession of those who are driven in the search for what is truth."

"I would have agreed with you a week ago," said John. "But now —"

"But now you're puzzled," finished the doctor. "You've momentarily been snatched out of your natural environment. You're confused because, for the moment, you've lost sight of the obsession of your own generation."

"And what's that?"

"Well," said the doctor, "I should say that the obsession of to-day is humanity. I don't mean that there's anything new about humanism, but that it's only lately become a preoccupation, a life force, and an atmosphere, the only atmosphere which you and I can breathe with any comfort to the soul. And when I say humanism I don't use the word as the assumed label of a philosophy but in the broad sense that describes the age when we are trying to look at God

through man as opposed to the epoch when we looked at man through a far-away God."

"And where do the Bradleys come in on all this?" asked John.

"I'll show you," said McNeil. "Most of us think of the elect as a unique division, but I don't. I've tried to puzzle it out and I've come to see in the elect a divided conglomeration, made up of those who are purified by their own sin and suffering and of those who are purified by the sins and the suffering of others."

He waited until he saw a gleam of understanding dawn in John's eyes, then he went on. "Those two elements can't mix but they are eternal complements. They can't mingle but upon their inherent affinity rests the fundamental doctrine of redemption, the beating, life-giving heart of Christianity. The generations of the one, our generation, yours and mine, comes and goes; the generation of the other is established, an everlasting generation in whose continuance the hope of the world abides. Its house is built solidly upon the rock of the eternal verities,—charity, faith, honor, justice, and mercy, but mercy *without surrender*. Only the unsullied belong to it. The Bradleys are of it. They are of those whose eyes are steadfastly fixed on a vision."

BOOK IV

And he passed into a land where hypocrites die; a land of one great word and of a single sound. Love's the word; the single sound, the beating of human hearts.

CHAPTER XXXI

LIFE of to-day is so laid out in minutes, each with a definite commercial value, that the average American winces at a mere statement of time. What true native son with his eyes fixed on a possible Presidency or directorship can face the front page of the usual shipping articles? "IT IS AGREED by the Master and seamen, or mariners . . . for the duration of the voyage . . . or for a term of time not exceeding 24 calendar months." To this psychological pressure alone might be ascribed the wholesale substitution of native by alien crews on such of our sailing ships as still cumber the seas.

John was a good seaman not only because he knew his work and liked it, but because he loved the sea. Twenty-four calendar months had no terrors for him and good seamen being almost as rare in this mechanical age as the ships that bred them, he was proportionately appreciated. Quite naturally, he turned to the deep sea and deep-sea boats to find a balm for his sore heart. He wondered where was the *Alexandrine* and with a vague idea of coming up with her, he shipped for a long voyage. During the five years that followed he joined only three vessels, called at only twelve ports, and the five years, measured by events, were almost as a single day.

But measured by growth they were not as a single

day. Dr. McNeil's final gift had been Balfour's "Foundations of Belief," the most bewildering, the most tantalizing book John had ever read. None other could have given such a twist to his continental philosophic viewpoint; here he had the Anglo-Saxon mind at its very keenest, standing with its back to the crumbling wall of orthodoxy and defending it with a rapier wit gleaming through mist.

The book was like an appetizer to John. It did not satisfy but it made him hungry. He started buying everything the ports he put in at could supply in the way of modern philosophies, and gradually felt his soul befogged in the smoke of the great battlefield of the mind: science taking issue with divine authority.

No single conversation ever crystallized the character of a man, but there are many men who can look back and see where the course of their lives veered endlessly to the breath of half a dozen words. John's last serious talk with McNeil did not culminate a period in his life except in the sense that birth culminates nonentity. It was not in itself formative, but it gave him a check, bent him to a new course, and brought to his existence a vague sense of definite direction.

The words to which he had listened that night, taken by themselves, were a mere trifle; but taken in conjunction with all that had immediately preceded them, the emotions, the spiritual shock, and the awakening that had come to him in catching a glimpse of a new firmament through Pauline's steady eyes, they carried a message of cumulative weight, gathering volume the more he pondered.

There was nothing spectacular or sudden about his development from this crucial point. The ultimate destination of any inner-man is sometimes measured by a single act, but more often it must be stated in terms of years, and John's was the commoner lot. His inner self had been moved, shaken, started at a tangent, but so gradual was the diversion of his course that a retrospective of mere months would have deluded him into the belief that the stranger who had been taken in by the Bradleys was the same man that went forth from them as a friend.

Where every day is alike, the years grow fast. John was almost unconscious of time until he awoke to sudden realization. He had been like a man who throws himself down at night, tired out, and the next moment awakes to find the morning sun blazing in his face. John looked back and found that he could count on the fingers of one hand all the happenings of physical moment contained in five years: a flying visit to his father, the blue, blue day a drunken officer piled the ship high and dry on the coast of Cuba, the day he was called 'aft and made second mate, and the agony of the moment when he knocked a seaman off the poop, down the gangway, and into an open hatch, and was saved from manslaughter only by the conjunction of a miracle and a loose cargo of grain.

To look back is to take stock. For the first time in his life John took stock of himself. He was just over thirty years old, old enough to look back and see the boy he had been. He understood many things now that had been hidden to his youth and to his father

in his blindness. He could see the reason and the mechanism of his revolt from the course his father had laid out for him. It was the same reason that as a boy he had picked upon as the obstacle to his being a teacher, only now he saw in it an obstacle to life itself. He had never been planted. Life had blown him hither and thither like a bit of thistle-down.

To-day he felt that, like the thistle-down, he bore a seed but that on each occasion that he had tried to settle down and take root some vagrant wind had caught him up and blown him on. Some men are born to be citizens of the world,—no city, no country, is large enough to hold them—but they do not dawdle away five years on three vessels. John knew he was no citizen of the world; he wondered if all his life he was to be a waif of circumstance.

Of the events that stood out in the blank years, the most significant was his promotion aft. That day marked the beginning of the decline of his love for the life of a mariner. He did not connect his change of mood with the leaven that had been working in him ever since he left San Francisco, but he gradually reasoned out his new stand. In a mechanical age, seamen in the old sense of the word, even stokers, are an anachronism. There is no justification left for an industry whose conditions once permitted and still demand the occasional man-handling of men, for despite the hedge of the modern law, every master and every crew of a deep-sea sailing boat knows that the moment comes, at least once to an officer, when he must hit and hit hard or give up his job.

The first principle of John's philosophy of personal freedom was that he should do no distasteful labor, and bullying seamen, who under the tension of seventy days at sea were as disorganized and unruly as tired children, had become a decidedly distasteful task. Consequently he made up his mind to ask for his discharge. For a mariner he was absurdly well in funds. At the last port of call he had received enclosed in a letter from his father, with whom he had left the Pot and Tot stories, a draft of such magnitude that it made him ponder long on the distorted values the world puts on the trifles of the mind.

For turning out of the fo'c's'le as an able seaman night or day, in snow, rain, heat, or cold, standing his watch at a heavy wheel in a sea-way, putting his back into a pull, splicing hawsers till his hands bled, and otherwise racking his whole strong body, he had drawn thirty dollars a month; for sitting on a bench in the shade spinning yarns to two tousle-headed children cuddled in his arms it seemed he could get thirty dollars an hour. But it was very simple after all. The work of his hands was sold but once; a hundred thousand consumers could stuff themselves on Pot and Tot at a fraction of fifteen cents a meal.

He left the ship at Capetown and put up at a modest hotel. In the reading room was an old copy of the *Maritime Register*. He picked it up and began turning its pages aimlessly, his eyes wandering down the columns and columns of names of ships at sea. His glance hung on the name of the *Alexandrine*. "*Alexandrine*," he read, "(sc) Carr 928 Baltimore, April 12

—Pensacola & Durban & Melbourne & Baltimore.” He looked back five years to the day he had left San Francisco with the vague intention of falling in with the *Alexandrine* somewhere. Why had he never thought of looking her up before? He had left it to chance and chance had played him a trick. Here was the *Alexandrine* turning up just when he had finished with ships for good and all!

He took passage on a steamer for Durban the next day and felt a thrill when a week later they picked up the Bluff light just before midnight. He was up by dawn and, full of thoughts of the *Alexandrine*, of Captain Ike, and of little Janice, he leaned on the steamer’s rail just under the bridge and watched eagerly for the unfolding of a familiar and oft remembered scene.

Would he know Janice if he saw her? He counted back through the years and got his second shock from time. Little Janice would be little no more; she would be a woman or almost a woman. Seventeen, eighteen years old, he did n’t know which, but in any case old enough to have quite forgotten the man who had been nurse to her for three months and young enough to blush for it if she were reminded.

As his mind played around the memory of her, trying to picture what sort of girl he would find, he was conscious of a depression subduing his high spirits. He looked about with suddenly opened eyes. The scene was changed; the port had grown almost beyond recognition. New sheds, new warehouses, and many new hotels had sprung up in a variegated jumble of brick, concrete, and painted iron roofing.

In the water before him crouched the hard masonry of the double breakwater, enclosing a deep channelled gut that led to a mighty wharf crowded with sheds whose broad roofs were overtopped by the funnels of great liners. Far, far up the bay the spars of a few lonely sailing vessels stood like cobwebs against the sky, like the cold gray limbs of bare trees in winter. John heaved a sigh. In every port it was like that. A backyard anchorage for the clipper ships, a graveyard for the Flying Dutchmen that haunt the scenes of an age that knows them not.

On his right stretched the Beach, now buried in macadam, masonry, restaurants, piers, scenic railways, formal lawns, bathing booths, claptrap, paper bags, and orange peels. It seemed to breathe and smell of throngs of people, wet bathing clothes and babies. Had its crowds quite swallowed the Janice who had sat above it with him on lonely, wind-swept dunes and watched untainted seas crash and break on the long line of its shimmering sands? He sighed for the phantom scenes that live no longer save in the hearts that loved them; for cities and ports, like people, can't stretch out their childhood days forever.

Feeling very glum he stepped ashore, but he clung to the hope that Captain Ike and his ship had not yet cleared and that the captain would cheer him up. A boatman reassured him. A few minutes later he was hailing the loafing mate of the *Alexandrine*. Yes, the skipper was aboard. He clambered up and over the rail.

"This way," said the mate.

"Don't bother," said John. "No one has to give me my bearings on this craft. I've sailed in her."

He made his way aft and found Captain Ike asleep in the same old Bombay chair in which John had once passed a sleepless night. He did not wake the captain immediately. He stood and stared at him and then at the ship. Captain Ike had gone very gray; the *Alexandrine* had gone gray. Even in sleep the captain's lined face gave little hope of cheer. John struck the deck with his heel, gave the thump that to a skipper is like a bugle call.

Captain Ike sprang erect in his chair. "Eh! What? What's the matter?" he cried, passing his hand over his eyes. Then he flushed with the annoyance of any one suddenly aroused and got slowly to his feet. He stared long at John. His face slowly lit up. "Well, son," he said, "how are ye?"

They sat down for a long talk and John soon found that his premonition had been correct. Captain Ike was full and overflowing with worries. Low freights, short charters, defection of the true seaman breed, the high repair accounts that go with inefficient crews, and a dozen other woes proved that he had realized the fact that he and his ship belonged to the world's army of supernumeraries, due for retirement without a pension.

But John's presence acted on him like a stimulant. His eyes twinkled and wrinkled at the corners and his shoulders tried to straighten. "You've jest got time to get your kit, sign on, and climb aboard," he said, slapping John on the shoulder. "We're towing out on the next tide."

John shook his head. "Not this time," he said.

"Ner any other time, eh?" said Captain Ike, suddenly gloomy again and as subdued as though he had quite lost the art of insistence.

"You see, Captain," said John, "I've just this morning blown in. I want to go up there on the hill." He nodded his head toward the Berea.

"No use," said Captain Ike. "I tried to find her two voyages ago. She an' the folks you left her with cleared out in the smash-up after the war. Hard times they had here an' no mistake. Guess they could n't weather the gale."

He spoke listlessly and when John got up to say good-bye he let him go without another word about joining the *Alexandrine*. John went ashore and hung around until he saw a tug bustle up and take her in tow; then he got his baggage and established himself at a hotel.

The next morning he started his search for a trace of Janice. He had forgotten the name, heard but once, of the people with whom he had left her, but he soon found that out. It was Dorien. Then he learned that Captain Ike had been right. The Dorien had gone down in the financial crisis that followed the war. For a time they had leaned on friends, and that had led, as usual, to the alienation of friendships. One defection in especial had cut Dorien to the quick. He had brooded on it and finally shot himself. Mrs. Dorien had realized what she could from every available source and sailed for England, taking Janice with her. No one that John could find had since heard from them.

Feeling desperately lonely, he left the scenes that

had so depressed him and made his way slowly up the coast. An island city attracted him, it was so old, so dead, so left out and behind of the onward sweep of the world. Here he lingered, and one day came upon the figure of a native standing at the edge of a deserted beach and gazing fixedly at the mainland. John approached and stared at the face of the black boy. It was eloquent with a loneliness so infinitely beyond his own that he felt as though the burden had suddenly been lifted from his heart.

He spoke to the boy but got no answer. He motioned to him to follow him, took him to the room he had hired, and fed him. The boy ate ravenously for a few moments, then stopped of a sudden and stared before him. Presently he roused himself, started putting the room in order and brushing John's clothes. John watched him in wonder, then he smiled. The lonely black was a trained houseboy. He evidently considered himself engaged.

CHAPTER XXXII

JOHN'S servant was not altogether dumb; besides his native language he could speak a few words of Portuguese. He said that his name was Muno-Muno and that he was far from his native land. When at the end of a week John offered to send him home he trembled from head to foot, his eyes grew large and glassy, and he shook his head in refusal.

John found an interpreter and learned the boy's tale, astounding to a European, a thing of every day to a native. Muno-Muno was banished. His father had gone mad, run amuck, and killed a man of another family. Muno-Muno had been offered in atonement. He had run away. He could never go back except to die. His own family would be the first to kill him.

John was loath to believe that such a law still ruled, but one glance at Muno-Muno's face told him beyond any argument that it was so. "What," he asked of the interpreter, "if the man that was attacked had killed the madman?"

"Eh!" said the interpreter, grinning. "His life forfeit. When a madman come, you run plenty, tell his family, his family kill him, nobody pay forfeit."

When John got a chance at a cheap passage on a freighter bound for New York with a cargo of mangrove bark, Muno-Muno went on board with the baggage and

refused to leave. He crouched under the rail, put his arms around a stanchion, and shook his head from side to side to everything that John said.

"Shall we chuck him over for you?" asked the captain.

"No," said John, smiling a little ruefully at the trouble he was laying in for himself. "I'll take him along."

After an uneventful voyage of forty-five days the freighter entered New York harbor and John set out with Muno-Muno for his old lodgings. The house was closed. He could find no trace of its former occupants nor did he ever learn what had become of the things he had stored with them. He tried to pass the portals of various modest hotels but found that even the servants' quarters of these hostelries balked at receiving Muno-Muno, who presented a weird figure, got up as he was in various tags and ends of clothing purchased during the voyage by John from sailors of different sizes.

Toward evening John was growing distracted and his cab bill was assuming the proportions of a mortgage. He voiced his despair to the proprietor of a last hotel who had been called in consultation by the clerk. "You see," said John. "I can't put him up at a colored hotel and myself here for the simple reason that he can't talk a word of English. He'd be absolutely helpless. Never saw a white man till five years ago and never put a hat on till to-day, or trousers, for that matter."

"Gee!" said the proprietor. "Is that straight?"

Why did n't you tell us he ain't a nigger?" He turned to the clerk. "Send for Sam."

In the few moments they awaited the head porter, two or three waiters and half a dozen bellboys gathered unrebuked about the black boy, who was staring straight ahead with fixed eyes, and a lobby loiterer drew near. In the background hovered the anxious cabman.

"What's his name?" asked the proprietor.

"Muno-Muno," said John.

The boy's face lighted. "Ya, baas," he said quickly, turning his eyes on John.

"Gee!" breathed a young bellboy. "Did-ya hear 'im?"

The head porter arrived, scowling. "Look here, Sam," said the proprietor. "Don't you make no mistake. This ain't a nigger; it's a African. Put him away somewhere and look after him. He belongs to this gent."

John saw his chance. He drew the porter aside and handed him a couple of bills. "When you can get off," he said, "take him out and fit him up with the right clothes so he'll look like a neat servant. Nothing loud or fancy and don't try to make more than two dollars out of it for yourself."

Sam grinned as he took the money. "Leave it to me," he said enigmatically.

That evening when John, under the leadership of the proprietor, looked up Muno-Muno to see how he was getting along, he found him sitting absolutely impassive before all the pages off duty, the head laundress,

four chambermaids, the head porter, and three waiters, who were pressing various dainties upon him.

"Here, all o' you," growled the proprietor. "What d'ya think this is? A dead-head show runnin' against the movies? Get outside and blow your nickels."

"Cut it out," said one of the waiters indignantly. "We ain't lookin' at him. We can't make him eat."

John laughed. "Bring him a big bowl of rice," he said, "and take away the cutlery. A little fried fish tumbled on top of the rice will make him love you forever."

During the days that followed Muno-Muno would have been utterly spoiled by the staff had it not been for the barrier of language and the grief that never left him. He himself was an unfailing object of curiosity, but nothing seemed to rouse his interest. When an aboriginal African is happy anything new delights him; he will chortle, jabber, and caper. But let him be filled with a lasting sadness or even downcast and he will meet his first horse, motor-car, telephone, airship, or any other modern wonder with an impenetrable apathy.

In his new surroundings the boy showed no emotion until the day that John explained to him that he must wait where he was for a few days, and then he betrayed his feelings only by a glance beseeching as short a separation as possible. John reassured him and decided to make this first visit to his father a very brief one. He left by an early train and before noon reached the old university town. He went straight to his father's house and to his amazement found it in possession of utter strangers. Professor Bogardus? No, he no

longer lived there. He had moved. A maid would go with John to the corner and point out the way to the professor's new abode.

John found his father in one of those horribly new little houses whose patch of lawn still looks like a grubby beard and which are possessed and possess everything that touches them with an air of transiency; the sort of house one hesitates to call a dwelling. The professor was in a room furnished with unfamiliar furniture of as cheap a grade as the house. The large chair in which he sat carried an air of having tried to accommodate itself to an angular apology for a bow-window and been pushed out.

James Bogardus himself was transformed. He was old, shabbily dressed, he had lost his erect carriage, and his quick, bird-like movements. Only his eyes remained the same, extraordinarily brilliant as they realized the presence of his son. "Well, well!" he cried, getting slowly to his feet. "Where do you hail from, Mr. Budding Author?"

John sat down on one of the new chairs and felt it give beneath him. He answered his father's greeting cheerfully; then his face grew grave. "Father," he said with a glance around, "what's the meaning of this?"

The elder Bogardus's eyes shifted nervously. "This?" he said. "Oh, it's easily understood. You can understand that the old house was too big for me, a little beyond my means. A chance came to let it, all furnished, just as it stood, and the opportunity seemed too good to miss — too good to miss." His eyes wan-

dered over everything except John. "I'm quite comfortable," he finished vaguely.

"Look here, Father," said John, as though he were speaking to a child. "You tell me the truth."

The professor's lined face set stubbornly for a moment; then it lit up with a sudden change of decision. He fixed his brilliant eyes on John. A twinkle shone in them. "You want the truth, eh?" he said in his old manner. "Well, you shall have it. Tell it not in Gath, my son, but eight months ago — eight months and three days, to be exact — at somewhat after the midnight hour, your father held four kings against four aces and — and made the aces call!"

"Whew!" said John, his face full of sympathy. "What did it cost? But never mind. Don't tell me. Is there a mortgage on the old house?"

"No, oh, no," said the professor, mildly. "You see, he called me."

Then John grinned while his father looked away and frowned. "You can appreciate," he said sadly, "what a blow it was to my theory of the science of Poker. It shows up the weak spot and that is that there are shades of calculation utterly beyond the range of the human mind. It was a great disappointment and coming as it did just as I had completed the revision of my monograph on the game it was a great shock."

"I should say so," said John, "if it drove you to living like this."

The professor stared at him in commiseration. "You misunderstand me," he said coldly. "The

shock was in having the aces call. He should never have called."

John threw back his head and laughed aloud. Then he sobered and got down to business. First he moved his father to a luxurious suite of rooms at the Inn, then he tackled the people who were living in the professor's old home. He let words throw them into a fiery consternation and then calmed and conquered the flames with a surprising flood of cold and eloquent cash. In two days they had moved out; in another the professor was back in his old beloved library, sighing over and over again with content, and following his son about with a wistful and loving gaze.

CHAPTER XXXIII

AS John settled down to enjoy the luxury of a parlor-car on his way back to town, an extravagance that seemed a mere trifle in comparison with the checks he had been signing for his father's benefit, he noticed that a young man sitting opposite, twirling a diminutive mustache, had laid down his paper and was studying his face intently.

Presently the young man swung his chair around and leaned across the aisle. "Is n't your name Bogardus?" he asked.

John looked up, surprised, and stared at the stranger's face. While it was vaguely familiar, he could not quite place it. "Yes," he said doubtfully, but smiling.

"You 've forgotten me," said the young man. "I 'm Jack Holson, the fellow that tried to keep you from firing yourself. I remember I even bearded the Dean in his den."

John's face lighted up. "Of course I remember you. It's that mustache that put me off."

"I know a mustache is n't at all the thing," said Holson, "but I 've just come back from Europe and I always wear one over there to keep down the tips at being recognized for an American and to save myself from being taken for an actor. I ought to have shaved it off but I 've sort of grown used to it this time and it gives me something to do with my hands."

John laughed. He felt light-hearted and at ease with Holson. They went to the diner together for lunch and after that drifted into the club car where they could smoke and talk in an approximate privacy. In giving a mere outline of how he had spent the years that had intervened since they had separated in the classroom, John made Holson open his eyes in wonder and a puzzled disapproval.

"So you've just loafed," he commented at last; "made your living but got nothing in the bank to show for wear and tear and the general depreciation of your plant."

John smiled. "Less money to-day than when I started," he acknowledged.

Holson seemed still puzzled. "You don't seem to mind it much," he said, "and for the life of me I can't tell you why you ought to, but of course you ought. I can't say that I feel any more comfortable than you look, but I'm drawing down a pretty decent-sized yearly pay envelope."

"Married?" asked John.

Holson frowned. "What made you ask that? No, I'm not. They tell me I'm always looking for it, though." Then he changed the subject. "Where are you staying?"

John told him.

"God!" said Holston, pityingly. "Are you as hard up as that?"

"No, not quite," said John, grinning, and told him what an obstacle Muno-Muno had been to his getting any lodging at all. Then he explained that his resi-

dence was temporary, that he expected to make enough money by writing to keep a little place in the country, and would n't Holson give him a pointer or two where to look?

"Well," said Holson, gravely, "it all depends on what class you're in. The writer breed flock together just like stockbrokers or any other business bunch. There's the lily-handed Boston crowd on the East and the virile life-in-the-open rough-necks south of 'Frisco on the extreme West. Sliced in between there's the Indiana domestics, a Ha-Ha crowd at Mount Kisco, a settlement of comic-dramatics and movie binders around Lake Hopatcong, and a large sprinkling of miscellaneous has-beens in the Connecticut hills."

"Thanks," said John, "but what I want is a very small house in a decent-sized wilderness, somewhere that I can take my ease in pajamas on the front stoop."

"Are you serious about the wilderness part of it?" said Holson, "Because if you are I'll show you a hand-me-down that will fit as if it was tailor-made."

"Where?" asked John.

"If I said right here in this State you'd laugh, would n't you? But just remember that three miles from a railway in New Jersey is as good as thirty in Wyoming. What are you doing next Sunday?"

"Nothing," said John.

"Well, tell that slave of yours to call you at six sharp. I'll pick you up in time to catch the seven o'clock ferry. It will be a long run but we can do it."

"Motor?" asked John.

"Yes," said Holson.

“It’s awfully good of you to take the trouble. I’ll be ready and waiting.”

“And in the meantime?” asked Holson. “Do you trot?”

“Trot?” said John. “What d’you mean? Don’t forget I’m several years behind the local language.”

“Of course,” said Holson. “I forgot. Well, put your gladdest clothes on this afternoon and let me show you the dotage of our little town. Everybody will be glad to see you; it’s such a pleasure to find some one now-a-days that you can surprise.”

By five o’clock John was being surprised and making no secret of it. The gilded room and the gilded flunkies of a *café chantant*, Americanized and raised to the *nth* power, the odor of wines, cocktails, and scented cigarettes and, above all, the well-dressed throng of excited dancers twined in the eccentric movements of the hey-day of the shake-your-shoulders rag, hit him in the very pit of the emotions and made him gasp for his mental balance. He remembered how shocked he had been at his first initiation to the American waltz, apologized to Joan in his mind, and laughed out loud.

“Some leg-show, eh?” said Holson, watching John’s surprise with satisfaction. “Look at old Mrs. Dunnel. Sixty, if she’s a day. I tell you, Bogardus, nobody had any idea of the physical vitality of our old Puritan stock till the rag hit New York. Come on over. I want you to meet her daughter.”

Holson introduced John to Miss Geraldine Dunnel, but managed, as many men do, to give the impression that he was presenting the girl for inspection. It was

as though he said, "Well, what do you think of her?" and stood by, intently watching for an unconscious verdict.

Miss Dunnel interested John until he learned that she was merely an index-card to a type. She was small but beautiful in the manner of a cameo. Her contours were all faintly defined but clear, her hands and feet exquisitely formed, her face alight but hard. She paid no attention to what was being said, kept her eyes fixed on the band, and the moment it struck up her whole body twitched. She rose and literally fell toward Holson. He caught her and they moved away.

"Young man," said Mrs. Dunnel, "don't you dance?"

John jumped in his chair. "No-no," he stammered.

Mrs. Dunnel raised one expressive shoulder and half turned from him. John looked at her curiously. The fever in her eyes was the selfsame fever as shone in the faces of the dancers, only it looked half-starved. He felt for her as one feels sorry for a drug-fiend cut off from supplies. "I wish I did," he murmured conciliatingly, but promptly regretted his overture when she sprang to her feet and said resolutely, "Come on. I'll teach you."

CHAPTER XXXIV

WHEN Holson, driving his own car, drew up at the curb before the hotel early on Sunday morning he found John ready and waiting, with Muno-Muno standing in the background looking sad even beyond his usual depression. "Is that the heathen?" asked Holson. "What's the matter with him? He looks as if he'd never seen a league game in his life. Smile, Sambo. Show your teeth."

"Poor devil," said John. "You don't know how it makes him feel to have me leave him. He can't speak a word of English and he does n't dare go ten steps from the hotel alone."

"Bring him along," said Holson, promptly. "Put him in the back seat to keep it from flopping over on us."

The car made slow progress until it had crossed the ferry and climbed the Jersey heights, but once on the Boulevard, Holson began to let her out and on the long, straight stretch across the flats they were doing a comfortable forty miles an hour when they struck a dust pocket. "Is he there yet?" asked Holson as they landed from the bump.

John glanced back at Muno-Muno. "He's there, all right, but his hat's gone and his teeth are chattering."

"Tell him to wrap himself in the rug if he's cold."

John pulled the rug from its rail and threw it at Muno-Muno. The boy spread it over his knees and drew it higher and higher, his glassy eyes fixed immovably on the back of his master's head. He never glanced at the landscape tearing by. Presently he began to wrap himself in the rug from the waist up.

The car, speeding south, passed through city, town, and village with a fine adjustment of speed that spoke eloquently of Holson's personal acquaintance with the local foibles of the police; consequently he was puzzled to find that everybody he met turned and stared and that the people were even lined up in the villages and waiting.

"Somebody must of yelled, 'Car coming!' over the telephone," muttered Holson, and a moment later swore as a motor-bike constable ranged up alongside and hailed him.

"Well," said Holson, trying his best to look pleasant. "What is it? Are you afraid I'll catch up to a funeral?"

"It ain't yer speed this time," said the constable, turning a deep red, "but *what are ya carrying?*" He jerked his head toward the tonneau.

Neither Holson nor John had looked back for many miles. They did so now and their jaws dropped. Muno-Muno, completely enveloped head and all but especially head, after the fashion of Africa feeling a bit cold, was sitting cross-legged in the exact center of the back seat as impassive and awe-inspiring a column of mystery as the wife of Lot after the transformation.

The car had come to a stop just in front of a cigar store, the village center of leisure and gossip, and was soon surrounded by an interested throng.

"What is it, mister?" whispered a freckle-faced urchin, hoarsely.

"Muno-Muno!" cried John.

"Ya, baas," replied the pillar and gradually worked an ebony head up through the tight folds of the blanket. Muno-Muno stared absolutely impassive at the face of his master.

"Gee!" breathed a youngster, "c'n it say 'papa' and 'mama'?"

"Say, mister, squeeze it again."

The constable stared nonplussed at the apparition which somehow seemed more of a mystery than ever, for there was something austere about Muno-Muno's face that never moved people to outright laughter just as itself was never moved to smiles.

Holson saw his chance and took it. "Look here," he said testily to the officer, "this is the Maharawek of Monomopotama and if he's bothered again between here and Atlantic City I'll see that the British embassy at Washington hears of it and you'll get what's coming to you for butting into other people's business."

He threw in the clutch and the car impudently spurted dust over the constable and the astonished bystanders. "Say," he said to John as they gathered way, "what d' you think of that for one out of the box? I'm going to let her out a bit. I'll bet he's busy on the telephone now getting us a clear road."

A few miles short of Atlantic City he turned at a

right angle and worked the car gingerly through two miles of a bad woodroad coming out on a narrow highway of crushed shell, that meandered through a vast area of salt marshes and finally emerged into a second-growth forest. An hour later the car drew up before the general store of one of those forgotten villages on the South Jersey coast that are just too far away from transportation to share in the harvest of summer boarders and summer money. Save for the trees that line their broad main street, they are gray; gray houses, weather-beaten and stung by the salt-sea winds, gray shell roads, gray men, and gray women living on misty gray incomes from gray boats, oysters, and clams.

"We leave the car here," said Holson. "Can the Maharawek carry the lunch-basket?"

The village ran lengthwise of a long spit of sandy loam that reached out into the sea, and was just too short and too low to be dignified by the name of promontory. On its south side lay the small-boat harbor and what life there was faced that way; on its north stretched sand dunes and the open sea.

It was toward the ocean that Holson led the way, followed by John, who in turn was followed by Muno-Muno carrying the large wicker lunch-basket on his head. On the porch of the general store an old man, apparently the only living inhabitant, stood pulling at a long chin-beard and gazing after them. Holson, following a telephone wire, topped a dune and stood still until John caught up to him. "There you are," he said.

Below them squatted a lonely little bungalow facing out to sea. Except for the thin strand of a single wire linking it to the general store it was entirely cut off from the world. "Lonely enough for you?" asked Holson.

John nodded. Together they walked down and around to the front of the house, where a broad, shady veranda welcomed them. Holson took a key from his pocket, opened the front door, and threw wide the shuttered windows, revealing a simple but charming interior completely furnished in every detail but all mantled with the fine white dust of blown sand.

"Here you have one large living-room with open fireplace," said Holson in the manner of a real-estate agent, "and on this side a summer and on that side a winter bedroom. The prevailing winds are from the southwest in summer and from the northwest in winter, or if they are n't they ought to be. This way, sir, you'll find the model kitchenette opening on the right into the suite of one room and one window, which seems made to order for the Maharawek of What-was-it. From this window you can see the outbuildings, wood-and-coal shed, ice-house, and the etcetera. There's a two-by-four porch built out from the summer bedroom which carries a shower-bath. When you want to lie down and splash, there's the whole Atlantic."

"That's enough," said John, laughing. "I'll take the place. If I had the cash I'd buy it."

"Foolish child," said Holson. "Never buy a toy when you can rent it and throw it back when the paint's worn off."

They went back to the veranda and found that with extraordinary rapidity Muno-Muno had unpacked the lunch basket, unearthed a tablecloth, moved out a small table, dusted it, and laid it for two. "Aikona flor, baas," he said to John.

"Jiminy!" cried Holson, "and I thought he was a heathen! What'll you take for him? What's he saying?"

John laughed again. "He's apologizing because there are no flowers."

They sat down to lunch in high spirits; even the sad face of Muno-Muno took on a sort of reflected brightness as though something told him he was through with hotels and alien fare. As Holson handed over to him an entire surplus roast chicken and John said, "*Muno-Muno fica, volto amanha*," a flicker of light, startlingly expressive, shone in the black's eyes.

"Did you see that?" asked Holson. "I'll swear you almost made him smile. Or was it the chicken? What were the mystic words?"

"I just told him to stay here and that I'd be back to-morrow," said John.

For half an hour they sat lazily smoking, and when Holson said regretfully, "Time we were moving," John asked, "How did this place happen?"

"There's no mystery," said Holson. "I had an aunt, a spinster, who was somehow left behind. What she lacked in good looks she made up in brains. She could see the day of woman coming and it made her so sore to think that she'd been born a generation or two short of the golden age for bachelor maids that she grew

one of those lifelong New England grouches and deliberately turned her back on the world."

He jerked his head toward the village and waved his hand at the open sea. "Poor old girl," he added after a pause. "She called this place The Outlook."

"That won't do for me," said John. "I'll just twist the name around and call it The Lookout."

CHAPTER XXXV

JOHN and Muno-Muno settled down in their new life so evenly and so softly that the shock of the radical change was almost completely absorbed. Every week John would telephone for supplies to the general store and when the packages came Muno-Muno would receive them, open them, put them away, and use them in absolute silence.

He was *safari* trained to cook, serve, wash, and to steal on occasion for his master, never from him. He had but one rule of life: to have everything ready before it was asked for. John knew when he sat down to table that he would have one of six or seven well-cooked dishes but he never knew which, and in that mild surprise lies much of the pleasure of eating.

The purchasers of the Tot and Pot stories which, by the way, had been published under a woman's name, were eager to consider a new series. John wrote it, but in between times turned his pen toward more serious matters. He was no exception to the writer breed. From doing charming old-style fairy tales in words of one syllable he turned to an essay on the sex-problem, a subject about which he knew less from an American point of view than the average washerwoman. He signed it with his own name, kept it for three weeks, read it, reread it, and burned it. For a fortnight he

thought hard and wrote nothing; then, as he sat one hazy Indian summer afternoon on the top of a sand dune, he fell to dreaming of cities he had seen. Suddenly an inspiration came to him.

He looked back intently at distant scenes. The turmoil of harbors, the rattle of traffic, the blare, the sweat, and confusion of present life, all died away, and to his undistorted vision rose each city eternally personal, detached; young, aging, or old, mostly feminine but occasionally hard and masculine as the sterile slopes of Antafogasta or the rock of Aden. Here was something he knew, something he could do; lay bare the hearts of cities, paint their aspirations, achievements or death against the settings that God and man had given them. Callao, Melbourne, and Sidney, Mozambique, Zanzibar, and Singapore. The words sang to him, each a spur to memory. To the essays of knowledge and love he began to write from that day he could sign his name unafraid.

John's new life was not entirely monastic; occasionally the isolation of The Lookout palled upon him. Southward he could not walk and his strolls in the opposite direction showed him how skilfully the builder of the bungalow had chosen her ground. Barely three miles to the northward the beach was broken by salt marshes that stretched as far as the eye could reach. At such times John would give Muno-Muno the freedom of the hickory woodpile and of the living-room fireplace, hire a buggy and a boy to drive it to the nearest railway station, and make for the city where he would stay for the few days it took to readjust and reconcile

him to his exile. He went away eagerly; he always came back gladly.

The winter cast an added gloom on the gloomy Muno; Muno, who went about the house entirely encased in the heaviest woolens John could buy; but with the first warm breath of the early South Jersey spring, peace began to return to his spirit and he shed garment after garment in rapid succession until an equatorial day in May found him sitting on the radiating sands, bare-headed, clothed only in a loin-cloth, taking all the punishment the sweating, outraged sun could give and asking for more, almost with a smile.

On his excursions, John almost invariably met Holson either by appointment or by chance, for he had unconsciously adopted the haunts of his friend and quite as invariably Holson was in tentative possession of a woman. He was forever discovering women, but fortunately the feminist curiosity that drove him usually ignored types and fed on individuals. As a result his subjects were generally interesting. He bore toward each in turn not so much an air of possession as one of doubt and inquiry. He was no miser. "Come see what I've found," was continually in his eyes if not on his lips, followed by the inevitable question, "What do you think of her?"

John would sometimes readily go and see, sometimes he would try to refuse, but it never got beyond trying, for under his flippant exterior Holson was hard. He was one of those pleasantly persistent men who seem to yield continually but who in fact never surrender. John found that he was not content merely to exhibit

women; he liked to discuss them as well. Not nastily, far from it; but as though he mistrusted his own judgment and wished to see them through others' eyes.

"Holson," said John one day, "why don't you marry? You need it."

Holson stared at him. "Why don't you?" he asked.

John stared back. They both stared gravely at each other for half a minute and then Holson broke out, "D'you really want me to tell you? When are you going back to your own yard and sand-pile?"

"To-morrow, if you'll run me down."

"I will," said Holson, "and I'll stay over night. Perhaps I'll stay over two nights."

At The Lookout there was literally nothing to do but walk and think or walk and talk. Summer was already waning and all Holson or John could stand in the way of sea-bathing was a quick plunge in the morning and another after their afternoon walk. In the evening they left the doors and windows open but had a fine log fire to take off the chill and to look at.

"Great thing, a fire," said Holson, pensively. "If I was a poet I would n't be forever writing, 'Spring, O Spring!' I'd write nothing but open fires and what you see in 'em. Watch it kindle and smoke as though it's in two minds which way it will go, then take hold and burn with a gorgeous flame, then glow steadily for a long time, and then turn gray. Just like a man, eh?"

John nodded. "But I don't like to see a fire go out; do you?" He called Muno-Muno and told him to put in a new back log.

"No," said Holson. "I suppose it's because we're

young or youngish. I'm just going to touch thirty. How old are you?"

"Thirty-two," said John.

"You know that aunt I told you about," said Holson after a pause. "Well, she was a wise one, all right. When she said a thing you could tell she'd waited and watched a lot before she let it out. One time she turned on me and said, 'Jack, marry young; after thirty a man marries with his head unless he waits for his dotage.' I just laughed. A thing like that does n't impress you at first."

John frowned into the fire. "I wonder if it's true," he said.

"Well," said Holson, "I guess it used to be. But it's a darned sight easier to say 'marry young' than it is to do it now-a-days. There was a kid I used to play with and I'd have married her along with my college dip. if she had n't died two years before I got it. Even so, I did n't think of her as having hit me especially hard and I looked forward to finding some one to tie to, but I found myself measuring the candidates up against her and before I knew it three years had gone over and the bunch of fellows that had mixed marriage with graduation were getting their divorces."

"Not all of them, I hope," said John, smiling.

"No," said Holson, "not all, but enough to make you think and think hard. I tell you the younger generation has to marry with its head before it's thirty, and from what I've seen the head is n't up to the job. I've seen my crowd try all sorts: city ingénues and three-season girls, two or three choruses and one leading

lady, and even the unspoiled country brand. Only one of the last but it's a prize sample. Poor old Marsten!"

"Marsten?" repeated John. The name seemed vaguely familiar.

"Sure," said Holson. "Charlie Marsten. You did n't know him. He was Yale and one of the finest fellows that ever stepped. Full of the old Nick, but he had a head on his shoulders and came into lots of money he did n't need. Turned from the hot-house ingénues that were after him and married a simple country maid. Joan, Joan Something-or-other."

John started in his chair and leaned forward. He tapped out his pipe. "What's become of them?" he asked. "Why have n't you ever run me up against them?"

"For the simple reason," said Holson, "that the fair Joan queens it in realms far above yours and mine, and Charlie — Well, no one sees Charlie for more than a minute at a time. He's a director in half a dozen big things and in a dozen small ones. To look at him he's older than his father was when he died and the last time I ran into him I said, 'Charlie, why don't you shoot yourself?' and smiled so he could n't get huffy."

"And what did he say?" asked John.

"Well," said Holson, "it is n't the sort of thing to repeat but he said, 'Jack, if she'd only take time out to have a kid I'd stand the racket and would n't give a damn.'"

After a pause John said, "I think your special cross-

section of life has struck a rotten spot in the national plank. You can't make me believe that there are n't lots of girls with simple hearts and simple ways that can love life just because they love some ordinary man. That sort of thing is fundamental. It can't die out."

"Of course there are," said Holson, "but the ones that are n't buried are n't labeled; that's my trouble. I tell you there's something the matter somewhere. I'm no psychological wizard but it seems to me it's got something to do with chastity, and when I say chastity I don't mean the irreducible minimum that Elise means when she says, 'I'm straight — honest!' after you've kissed her, fondled her all over, and dangled her on your knees. Why, if you'll believe me, the kid I told you about would jump and say it made her burn all over if I laid a finger on her. She had an idea that her person, just the bloom on it, was as precious as sapphires and pigeon-blood rubies! As for my cross-section of life, you can't look around farther than you can see, can you? However, I have n't stopped looking. Have you?"

"I don't know," said John, and from that day began to think of marriage as a thing in itself and not as the incidental culmination of a love affair. Was it true that he was getting too old to marry? Was n't life without marriage a sort of premature death? Was n't all passion vile that did n't justify itself by creation? How does a man set out to marry before it's too late?

He looked back and reviewed his own life. Had he missed any chances? Surely not in Joan; Holson's unconscious news had proved that. He thought of Pau-

line and remembered the sudden barrier that had shut her from him. He looked farther and farther and a faint despair seized him, a sadness born of thoughts of the inevitable steps of the past that cannot be retraced. For days his spirit was mute; life was mute. He was too far away from it. Here neither those who were saved by the sins and the sufferings of others nor those who lifted themselves through their own sin and suffering could touch him. He grew restless, and when winter drew near closed up *The Lookout* and taking Muno-Muno with him sailed for the West Indies.

No choice could have been more unhappy, for those lovely isles are but a tomb, a tomb of the whites that ruled there once, then fought for a foothold, that finally were ruled in turn, and to-day are but a crumbling husk of a race caught and devoured like a tree in a cruel parasitic grip; racial conquest at its worst, victory in terms of guinea pigs. It was a combination of a sordid atmosphere and Paradise. John more than once was seized upon by ignoble desires. He felt himself abased and fled from island to island and finally back to his retreat, never so glad before at a return.

CHAPTER XXXVI

ONCE more John's thoughts turned to introspection. What was life to him? Where did he stand? He could see that he had chosen well in hiding himself away at The Lookout. At least he had saved himself from the treadmill whirl that held Holson even while it repelled him. He could look back now with a clearer gaze than ever before, because he knew what he was looking for. He was seeking that thread in the varied strands of his life that stood most for permanency and he recognized it at last in his writing. Here was a thing that was intimately his, that had grown as he had grown, and that rightly nurtured might become more than a mere staff of life, might grow into a bulwark and a continuing source of youth.

As he pondered he suddenly realized that his writing was a bigger thing to him than he had suspected, that it lay near his heart. Heretofore he had looked upon it as a diversion, a sort of stop-gap; now he turned definitely from dilettanteism as a man turns from trifles to a red round of beef, sought his weaknesses, found his limitations, and bent his efforts toward wiping them out. He was entranced by the power of words, their power to evade, but once seized, to grip a flower, a heart, or a thought, and hold it eternally fragrant, pulsing or ringing on the printed page.

Then came the war. It burst upon him in one big mouthful of news from the grocery boy. He could not believe it. All his life long he had heard that this war was bound to happen; all his life long he had heard that Austria-Hungary was nothing but a bomb with its fuse trailing loose-ended in the Balkans, looking for a spark; all his life long he had said to himself, "It won't happen in my day. I'll never see it." And now — it had come.

There is a barbaric streak in the young and the near young that always records a feeling of elation at news of a catastrophe. It is a horrible thing to say but it is true, that man instinctively loves best to hear of horror. He has loved to hear of horror, of the mountainous deaths of others, for thousands of years; it is only half a dozen generations since he began to value the life of a man above the market value of a suckling pig.

But it was to no such primitive source that John traced his sudden exaltation. It seemed to him that from Ari Fródi and Kolsegg Asbjornsson down to Cervantes, Camoens, and Milton, the monuments of literature had been built not by men but by the times in which they lived. It seemed to him that great books sprang from the growing-pains of nations, from the turmoil of their ascendancy, from the rumbling echo of their downfall, from any mighty issue that raised men above the dead level of food and raiment, that reëstablished perspective, and made giants and heroes of those who but now had cringed at petty trades.

In this mood he went to the city. The rest of The Lookout had palled upon him. He wanted a rest from

rest, just as one turns to beer from an overdose of tonic. But he did not wish to plunge into the city whirl himself so much as he craved the distraction of sitting for a while where he could watch it. Consequently he was not overjoyed at running into Holson at the very moment of entering the supper room where he had engaged a small corner table.

There was a gleam in Holson's eyes that John had seen so often before that he took a laughing chance shot with, "Not to-night, old man. I've come up to town for a rest. I want to hear people chatter, but I don't want to chatter myself."

"You've guessed it," said Holson, smiling. "There's somebody I want you to meet. You're lucky," he continued amiably, as with hands in pockets he accompanied his victim toward his table, "lucky to have dropped in to-night."

John was not deceived by Holson's smile nor by the apparent acquiescence in the fact that they were walking away from Holson's party. However, he was not inclined to give in without a struggle. He sat down at his own table with an air of finality, well acted. Holson continued standing, smiling and unmoved.

John glanced half along the room to where a party of seven were watching with amused impatience their absentee host's imperturbable back. He realized that in a moment some one would begin to look ridiculous and it would n't be Holson.

"Look here," he said, "don't be an ass. You're not short a man. Clear out."

"Uncle does n't count," said Holson. "You've

never met my uncle. We'll put him between us. He's married, you know,—up to the neck. That's one reason why I want you."

A woman, one of the seven, caught John's eye. A tiny frown was just beginning to pucker her brow. He suddenly knew that if he did not get up, and quickly, she would walk out of the room. He saw it coming and arose, almost with a motion of haste.

"Who's the lady that's not merely dressed?" he asked.

Holson's smile brightened. "That's the very one, the one I want you to meet. Dora Temple, you know. Came over as understudy to Talleck's leading lady and fell heir to the part. Sort of girl-woman. Interesting. Everybody's after her; nobody gets her."

As he approached, John kept his eyes on Miss Temple. He saw the tiny frown clear from her brow and good-nature return to her face.

CHAPTER XXXVII

IT was a merry party. By expectation Miss Temble should have dominated it, but to everybody's surprise it was Holson's uncle that assumed the scepter in the end. His peculiar position between his nephew and John drew the eye and at first threatened to make him the butt of the talk.

"Have you been naughty?" smilingly asked the prettiest of the women, leaning across the table toward the little man. "You look as if you'd been interned."

"No war talk, please," said Holson. "We're all as tired of it as we are of weather and for the same reason. Any fool can tell you the sun's shining or it is n't."

"Not talk war?" said a man heavily from the opposite side of the table. "We simply must. It's all I've heard to-day."

"Well, let's don't," said the prettiest woman gaily. "We'll just sit and watch each other eat."

"No, we won't," said Holson. "We'll talk marriage. Uncle has n't been naughty but he's been married. What's more, he's still married."

Everybody looked at Holson's uncle in feigned or actual commiseration, but he bobbed his head in cheerful affirmation.

"Please let me do my share first," said the man across the table. "What is marriage, after all?" He im-

mediately subsided and turned his attention to soup and a dish of salted almonds.

"Isolation," said the prettiest woman with a mischievous glance at Holson's uncle.

"Make it insulation," said some one else.

"Double," said Holson, more from the habit of bridge than from wit.

"You 're none of you even warm," said Miss Temble, watching Holson's unperturbed uncle. "Let me try. A voyage on an inland sea." Her low voice floated clearly to the limits of the table but not beyond.

The uncle gave her a quick, bright glance. "Thank you, my dear," he said simply. "A landlocked sea is peaceful."

"Well, Uncle," said Holson, "you're the only actually married person in this charming circle. Hear us all and then play referee. Speak up, Bogardus. Your turn. What's marriage?"

John fingered an olive absently. "I wish to God I knew."

"What!"

"Traitor!"

"Say it again!"

"Fact," said John, his face still absent and puzzled as though he were back alone on the sands of The Lookout, thinking over this very same knotty problem. "If I only knew, I'd marry."

"Or perhaps you would n't."

John shook his head. "No," he said, "one is n't afraid of a certainty. Doubt is the single source of fear."

Miss Temble looked at him curiously. "That's true," she said. "I should have liked to have said that."

John turned half toward her. He felt an impulse to stop and appraise her, but he suppressed it. "Life," he went on, "holds only two finalities: marriage and death. They are the only things we can't taste first."

"Not marriage," said some one. "You're wrong there. Lots of people taste it first."

"The exception that proves the rule is always over-worked," said John with an expression of distaste. "You all know that in practice it's absolutely true that men such as we are can't go up to women such as are here and say, 'Let's try it first.' It would n't be fair. Parity is too far off."

"But it's on the way," said the prettiest woman. "I don't mean vile freedom, exactly, but that we'll all live more or less *à la carte* before long."

"Never!" said Holson's uncle, suddenly, his bright eyes sweeping the circle and drawing every gaze to his shining face. "You've all had your say," he went on, "and you've made me referee. Now, listen!"

"Hear! Hear!" said Holson, under his breath.

"If it were a mere matter of chivalry," continued his uncle, with a jerky little bow toward Miss Temble, "I would give the prize to you. Thank God, marriage is sometimes a voyage on a peaceful inland sea. But we're up against a matter of fact, not of chivalry. After all, you've every one given the same answer. In varying terms, you've all called marriage a restriction — a personal restriction."

“ Well, is n’t it ? ”

“ No. It is n’t a restriction and it is n’t personal.”

There were cries of protest from three different quarters. “ Not a restriction and not personal ! ” exclaimed the prettiest woman. “ Why, those are two things that it just certainly is ! ”

“ You ’re blind, the lot of you,” said the little man. “ Not blind, exactly, but bandaged.” He paused, his glance passing, a little troubled, from face to face as though he strove to gage the measure of reception in the minds behind the eyes that watched him.

“ You all have the same idea of marriage,” he went on, “ that it begins at the altar and ends in the courts, except in the rare cases when you think it binds affinities. Just think it out and you ’ll see that true affinities don’t require the altar any more than they do divorce. Neither does marriage. That ’s why I say it ’s impersonal. Marriage is n’t propped on individuals. It stands alone and looms over the well- and the ill-assorted like a rock. You can bruise yourself against it but you can’t shake it. If the tenure of marriage depended on affinities — ”

He broke off with a smile and held out one pudgy hand with fingers extended. “ Here, look back on life as you ’ve seen it and count the affinities you ’ve known on the fingers of my hand.”

“ Do you mean,” said John, still playing with the olive, “ that if the men and women trooping out of a theater paired off couple by couple, like the animals coming out of the ark, the average success of marriage would be just the same ? ”

"The average success of marriage," said Holson's uncle, "is a masterly phrase. It hits the nail of my argument on the head. Such an arrangement as you have illustrated would be the death-blow to many a personal emotion. It would rob the world of many a flash of divine fire. But the point is this. It would n't even scratch the face of marriage."

"I don't believe it," said the prettiest woman.

"You reduce marriage to the proportions of a habit," said some one else.

"Reduce!" cried Holson's uncle. "Is there anything stronger than habit? But you're not going to drive me to a *cliché*. I refuse to call marriage a habit and let it go at that. Bogardus was much nearer the mark when he classed it as a finality. That's it. An element. An absorption, not an institution. Marriage itself is unchanging, but the things we bring with us to it —"

The little man's eyes wandered from the faces before him. He nodded his head slowly. "There's the whole rub," he went on. "The things we bring with us to it. The garlands of purity, devotion, constancy, or — or tinsel, that individually we lay on its immemorial altar — that's what counts. That's the whole matter."

He brought his gaze back to the table, glanced quickly around, and suddenly smiled. "Well, well," he said. "Now you know, eh? Now you know."

They all looked at him with grave but kindly eyes. For the first time he seemed a trifle nervous, almost embarrassed. "Jack," he said to his nephew, picking

up his glass and looking at it critically, "I don't want this liqueur after all. There's a gayer one that goes better with the candle shades."

"I know, sir," said Holson, promptly. "Mandarin."

When the party broke up John felt as though his interest in Holson's uncle had cheated him out of Miss Temble. He turned to her and spoke as if he had a grievance. "D' you know I've hardly spoken to you nor you to me, and it's all over? Do give me one little chance. Let me see you home."

"I'm sorry but it's impossible," said Miss Temble.

John felt a disproportionate shock of disappointment. "I'm sorry, too," he said, his eyes underlining each word.

"You see, I'm home already," said Miss Temble, and smiled.

"Not really!" cried John with a boyish laugh. "That's great. I'm hanging out here myself."

"Good night, you two," called Holson with a wave of his hand and disappeared, piloting his little uncle across the lobby.

Miss Temble led John to the elevator. "What floor are you on?" she asked.

"Fifth," he answered.

"So am I."

They got out and walked down the hall together. She stopped before a door and John reached out to throw it open for her. He caught a glimpse of a private sitting-room before he held out his hand to say good night.

Miss Temble brushed past him. "Come in," she said. He followed her. After the slightest hesitation,

he left the door open behind him. For a moment he walked about not quite at ease. The room was not unlovely. Unlike most hotel rooms it had an air of continued habitation and it was as fragrant as a garden of roses. Roses were everywhere. Even the open fireplace, long stranger to coals, had its ugliness made beautiful by a mass of them.

Miss Temble looked from the open door to John and back again. "Oh, you Americans!" she laughed, with a lifting of her shoulders. "You not only mind everybody else's business but you insist on their minding yours."

She reached out one slim foot and started the door. A draft caught it and it closed with a bang.

"Did you hear it say damn?" she asked.

John laughed.

Before the fireplace there was a great leather couch. Miss Temble pointed to one end of it. "Sit down there." She pushed a small table to his elbow. On it there were cigarettes and matches and a silver ash tray that was not of the hotel.

John held the cigarettes toward her but she shook her head. "Not just now," she said.

He lit one himself and settled back, his eyes fixed on his hostess. The moment was propitious for appraising. She stood with one crooked elbow on the mantel over the fireplace, her head propped on her hand. It was a pose but John felt it was unconscious and found it lovely beyond anything he had anticipated.

His gaze passed rapidly from the small head down the line of beauty. The rounded grace of her neck, of her

shoulder, and of the long firm arm that hung at her side challenged his eyes to linger, but they swept on, eager to seize the whole of her slim, flowing body at a glance. When his gaze reached her one visible foot, daintily shod in satin, clad in silk, he sighed and then, as though it had called his eyes, raised them to her face.

She was looking directly at him, her black eyes wide open under the clear, arched line of her brows, but her face was a mask. "How old am I?" she asked, her lips scarcely moving.

John did not think to lie. "Twenty-four," he guessed without a smile.

Her head gave a playful toss. It was as though she flicked the mask away. Her eyes brimmed over with light. A smile broke the firm line of her lips. A dimple burrowed suddenly at the side of her chin. She clasped her hands and bent her shoulders toward him. "And now?" she asked with a merry shake of her head that set the lights and shadows in her dark hair to dancing.

"Now," said John, with a catch in his breath, "you're a child, just a child." His eyes filled with a vague, a puzzled trouble.

Miss Temble straightened. Immediately she seemed to stand midway between girl- and womanhood. "That's me as I should be," she said with just a shade of wistfulness in her smile and in her voice. "I am twenty to-day. Which do you like best?"

"I like you both," said John, without a pause. "I like you now. I like all of you."

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE next afternoon John was having tea in Miss Temble's sitting-room. A sudden peace had descended upon him; the ever-present war seemed to have loosed its grip. He had forgotten it. He felt that if he could only sit always watching Miss Temble, absorbed in the grace of her movements, so practised but so unstudied, he might forget it forever. She was so natural, not with the naturalness of youth but of experience, that from the first moment he had been alone with her he had felt absolutely at ease. He could imagine her abashed, thrown out of poise by the merest slight in a crowd, but never anything but sure and unhesitating when alone with a man.

He felt her beauty growing on him apace but he was not frightened. "Do you know," he said, after a silence broken only by the tinkle of tea-cups and the striking of a match, "I have the funniest feeling that soon I'll be asking you, begging you, to marry me?"

"I thought you would," said Miss Temble, quietly, "but — Where's doubt? Did that dear little man quite cure you of wanting to — to taste marriage first?"

John paid the tribute of a smile to her composure; then he said gravely, "No, I don't think he did."

They sat in silence for a moment, then Miss Temble said, "Are you quite foot-loose? Quite your own master, I mean?"

"As much as ever man was," said John. "A pad of paper and a pen are my staff of life and I live in a little cottage by the sea on the edge of a village to which I am merely a name. Are you, too? Foot-loose, I mean."

"Absolutely," said Miss Temble. "We closed our season here last night."

There was another long pause. Miss Temble's eyes fixed on John's face with a strange intensity. "You see," she continued at last, "parity is not so far off as you thought."

John started and rose slowly to his feet. He stared at her. "What did you say?" he asked.

"I said parity is not so far off as you thought," answered Miss Temble, steadily. "It's here. In this room."

He turned and walked up and down before her, his hands in his pockets, his eyes on the floor. Presently he stopped and faced her again. "I'm thirty-three years old. I've lived a lot. I have n't been altogether a saint."

Miss Temble nodded. For a moment the old look, old in knowledge, came into her face. "I have n't been altogether a saint, either," she said.

John looked at her keenly. "I wonder," he said, "do you mean by that all that I meant?"

She threw out her hands in an impatient gesture. "Yes, I meant — everything."

Suddenly John found that his breath was coming short and fast. He looked at Miss Temble and saw that she, too, was breathing fast. There was a rich

glow in her cheeks, such a glow as only dark women who never grow old can boast.

“Do you — Would you —” he began and stopped as Miss Temble slowly raised her hand. She said nothing, but it was as though she had told him aloud to think before he spoke.

He started walking up and down again, his brow puckered in a puzzled frown. His footsteps, muffled by the soft carpet, seemed to say, “Why not, why not, why not?”

Love had passed him by. What had he to lose? What might he not gain? Only now he realized how desperately he had longed of late for a touchstone wherewith he might test the mystery of marriage. Here it was. It had come to his hand.

He glanced down at Miss Temble. She was not watching him. She was sitting very still. When some one at the supper table had said, “Lots of people taste it first,” he had winced at the vulgar visions the words had conjured. Now his downward glance reassured him. Vulgarities and Miss Temble were beyond simultaneous conception. Her note was fineness. She was fine in every contour, fine in the quality of her inward as of her outward person.

He sat down beside her, lifted her hand from her knee, and held it lightly between his own. “Coming down to my little place will be like dropping out of the firmament for you,” he said. “You can’t be a star for the multitude down there; you’ll have to be just a human being. Can you stand it?”

She looked up at him and something in her face, so

near, so warm, so alive, struck him as it had before with a vague, a troubled fear.

“Only,” she said, “if you and I start from to-day — not from any yesterday. Seal your past as I shall seal mine. Promise. And then —” She clenched her hands. “Then let’s try to blot yesterdays out of mind. Shall we? Let’s *be* just human beings. Why, that’s just what I want. Just to be a human being for a while, and play.”

There were depths of longing beneath the lightness of her words and voice. John felt the hidden sadness of her heart. He reached out his hand and touched her. “I promise,” he said.

She sprang to her feet. In the flash of an eye she was gay. She whirled across the floor in a merry but intricate step; then stopped, clapped her hands and laughed. “To-morrow?” she cried. “No, nor the day after. But the very day after that. Now tell me where it is, how it is, and when will I get there if I start very early on the very day after the day after to-morrow!” She caught her breath and laughed again and John laughed with her. With the length of the room between them they nodded good-by.

Two days later John met her at the nearest station with a buggy which he drove himself and a spring-wagon driven by a boy for the luggage, and took her to The Lookout. They left the buggy at the grocery store and walked the last quarter mile through the sand in silence. John was uneasy but from the moment Miss Temble reached the house, flew through it like a playful breeze and out again to the broad veranda, he

caught her mood and lived it with her. She glanced around and out to sea and her whole body gave a ripple of content.

"I'm just Dora, now," she said, sighing with happiness.

He put his arms around her and his blood surged at the firm contact of her body. "Do you want me to?" he asked, with the ardor of a boy. She nodded and held up her lips to his.

A moment later she was peering over John's shoulder but clinging to him. "What is that?" she asked. "Why, it's a live black man!"

John looked around and followed her gaze. The dejected figure of Muno-Muno, stripped to the waist, was seated on a distant sand-dune facing out to sea. He had not heard them come. His head was fallen forward between drooping shoulders and his whole pose seemed to breathe despair.

"That's Muno-Muno, my servant," said John.

"What is it?" said Dora, facing about but drawing John's arm around her. "What is it about him?"

"I know what you mean," said John. "Poor devil! His life is forfeit in his own country. He can never go back."

"Poor, poor boy," said Dora, the tears springing to her eyes.

John stared at Muno-Muno. In a measure he was the key to the present situation. He was like a black finger of destiny. Without him their stage of isolation could scarcely have been set; with him, all was made plain, indicated.

CHAPTER XXXIX

THEY had their supper on the veranda. Munno, fully clothed, cooked for them, served them, and anticipated all their wants as though they two were one and that one his familiar master. Not even with his eyes did he question. Dora could scarcely take her gaze from his face. Never before had she seen one who bore in his carriage and countenance the imprint of a single preoccupation, the deep brand of one perpetual thought. Even if John had not told her, this boy's face would have said to her eyes and to her heart, "I am exiled. I am exile!"

It was a still, a breathless evening, but with the rising moon there sprang up a breeze that flapped the fringes of the veranda awning and made them call and beckon impatiently to the two sitting within, "Come out! Come out!"

John rose. "Let's walk on the sands."

Dora glanced down at her satin slippers. "Wait a minute," she said, and ran to her room.

Five minutes passed before John felt her presence in the doorway. He turned and started as though a stranger had suddenly come upon him. Dora had changed from her frock into a short skirt, a very short skirt. With it she wore a cherry colored blouse, open at the throat. She had changed her slippers for shoes and had let her hair tumble down just any way and

tied it at the back of her neck with a great black bow. Her eyes were sparkling with a mixture of fun and elfish shyness. Her moist lips were half parted and her bosom rose and fell as if she were panting a little from her haste.

John felt a lump rise in his throat. He strode forward, caught both her hands in his, and buried his face in them. "My dear," he said, "my dear." His lips trembled so that the words were barely audible.

Dora gently freed one hand and laid it on his shoulder. "Come on, boy," she said.

To John and Dora, thrown absolutely upon their own resources, a concentration of life was possible beyond all relation to time. In a week they lived through all the sensations of a normal year. They played the whole gamut of erotic emotion as though they were racing the days to their world's end.

"Are you happy?"

"Never so happy in all of life."

Question and answer were too often on their lips and, asked and answered, left them chilled — frightened, as though, sitting but now in sunshine, they awaked to find themselves under a dark shadow.

They thought that they were testing marriage, but the fevered existence that they lived was as little like marriage as a concentrated essence is like the fragrance of flowers in a field. Life pays sometimes in years and sometimes in moments. It was paying in moments now, — moments that lifted them on the wings of the morning to the heights where the heart soars never alone only to plunge them thence in dizzying downward swoops

into the black vale of regret for the things that had been. And yet they dreamed.

“My Dora.”

“My boy.”

There were things that John learned, a thousand things that he learned. A night came when they sat in the dark on a couch on the veranda and he held her in his arms. She lay across his knees, her head pillowed in the hollow of his arm. “Won’t you get tired?” she asked. “Tell me when you get tired.”

He laughed. “I could hold you like this till the morning.”

Silence fell on them, a long, long silence; then suddenly, she gasped, “Darling, I’m *c-crying!*”

He lifted her face to his lips. Her cheeks were wet, flooded with tears. A lump was in his throat. “Dora! Oh, Dora! Don’t cry!”

“But I *w-want* to cry!”

And so he learned that there are recurrent days when all a woman asks of life are tears and the nursing of loving arms, days that brand her eternally feminine and demand love and the passionless caress as simply and as desperately as ever babe clutched at its mother’s breast. At such moments of absolute intimacy there was for them no past and no future, only the present and peace and a great content. Surely they two were indivisible, inseparable, veritably one!

However sublime a moment, in time it is but a moment still, subject as the most throbbing life to the chopping shears that are our common lot. John drank his brimming cup of exaltation as fast as it would fill but

ever found it shallow. His glorious moments were strung like pearls upon a string; between each two a shadow, a chasm. More than once it was on his lips to ask Dora to unseal the past, but he knew that to-day, now, there were things she dared not tell because he dared not hear.

He could make himself dumb to their covenant of silence, but not blind; so, even while he nursed her with infinite tenderness, visions of the things untold came like the chopping shears and filled him with poignant rage for the long road without returning that she had traveled before she reached the haven of his arms.

"Haven, yes, haven!" cried his aching heart but his head answered pitilessly, "Port of call!" For it is in the power of no woman who has used the hearts of many men as ports of call to quite lock her past from sight. She may never speak of it, never even think of it, she may deceive the multitude all the time and herself part of the time, but sooner or later the slip comes when an understanding ear is by; some phrase, some single word, standing out from all other words to the knowing hearer because it is a branding shibboleth that not only pins the speaker to the tarnished world but illumines the very path, high or low, in which she once walked.

Once Dora used such a word, playfully, laughingly, as it had been used to her, and John's whole body stiffened. "Why," she cried, looking at his face gone suddenly white and set, "what's the matter?"

He gripped himself and said earnestly, "Darling, never use that word again."

"Why?" she demanded, amazed, still laughing.

Then she traced the little word, so innocent in itself, back and back until suddenly it was her face that went white and set. Her bosom rose and fell rapidly and she gasped, "I am so young, so ignorant and you — you hidden away here in your land's end of a little house, you know so much. Oh, you have frightened me," and she began to cry as he had never seen her cry before, deep sobs that tore up from her heart and aged her face.

In such moments of absolute distress love can forget any sin however heinous, and John loved Dora; not with the fringe of his senses, as he had loved Joan, not with the adoration and the awe with which his whole being had bowed down before Pauline, but with his heart, just with his heart. So he quickly banished his own hurt, took her in his arms and nursed her, talked to her as he would to a child and she sobbed herself to sleep, her face against his breast.

In the long still hour that followed a new fear was born to John. Twice, thrice, he had felt it vaguely, tried to seize it and failed. Now, in this hour of silence, it appeared before him; at first, mistily as a wandering wraith, then clearer and nearer until his eyes fastened and fixed as on some sinister apparition. Yes, this was the thing that had been hanging on the outskirts of his mind. To just such a child-woman might Janice have grown in a buffeting world.

At the thought he felt no elation, only horror. That such a thing might be seemed to him so horrible that he attributed the very thought of it to a fevered brain. His brain was playing him tricks. He had been thinking too much, too morbidly, of Dora's past. And yet —

Just so old and young might Janice be, just so dark of hair and eyes and brows, just so might her gaiety be tinged with sorrow, wistfulness, and irremediable pain. As for her name, how many women attaining the stage by the *via dolorosa* ever clung to the names of their innocence?

The new doubt seized on him, grew into a great fear. What was it he had said, the first thing he had said to draw Dora's eyes and thoughts upon him? "Doubt is the single source of fear." And she had said that it was true, he had thought it was true, yet here was a fear that was greater than doubt.

It would be so easy to dispel doubt and so sensible. He could ask her to break their covenant, just to tell him the meaningless skeleton of her life, where she was born, where she had lived, were her people alive? She might refuse, for she had been steadfast to that covenant. There was a hardness in her, a hardness gained of life, that told him she could be firm as rock and a shrewdness, too — a shrewdness that would jeer at any clumsy trap.

She might refuse. But what if she did? Could he not await some still moment when her thoughts were far away and then say, "Janice! Janice!"

He shivered and Dora awoke. For a second her eyes were dazed as though she had quite forgotten where she was; then she smiled, lifted her bare arms slowly around his neck, drew him down, kissed him on the mouth.

"Ah, no!" cried his heart. "Cling to doubt! It's such a silly doubt, but cling to it."

CHAPTER XL

SHADOWS and darkness cannot fill all of life nor even dim the present happy moment. There were whole days when John and Dora were rocked to a dreamy sleep in the arms of an absolute content. Forgotten was the war, forgotten the whole world. Munomuno was forbidden to use the papers to light the fire. They were set neatly in a corner in a pile that grew and grew. Gray and sullen it looked, like some bit of creeping masonry crawling upward toward its own day. It stood in the house of folly like an emblem of abandoned sanity.

The course of love itself was not all even. Dora and John quarreled more than once, sometimes prettily, purposely, but sometimes desperately, with an earnestness that sank deep and left a wound. These graver tiffs had but a single source; they arose invariably with Dora from some imagined or careless slight on the part of John. Did he so much as hesitate in rushing to pick up her handkerchief, move her chair, or hold her jacket, anger would flame in her cheeks, her eyes would grow hard and she would say, "Tired of me? Say so if you like, for I got there first. I'm sick of you. It's time I went and I'm going."

At first he believed her and his belief threw him into a panic. He could not understand that her defense was

as old as unhallowed love, the quick rush to arms of a woman who seeks to save herself from the shame of desertion by a lover. His panic always brought her back to good-humor quicker than any words could have done, but when he came to reason out the fear behind her sudden rages, he could not feel nor feign alarm and then he could only calm her by long and passionate protest.

Even so, their weeks together were a time of glory. They were like a breathless journey through mountainous country. There were storm-clouds and gashes of lightning and there were dark valleys; but then, too, there were sunshine and the high, windswept peaks that limit the range of man's emotion. For these, regret could never be.

Some women of charm grip by a single magnetism, a predominating force that dwarfs and hides its accompanying faults, but Dora gripped and held a heart by her diversity. To see her in the evening rigged out through caprice in some diaphanous and exquisite gown was to see a goddess of Mammon straying through pastoral scenes, but to see her short-skirted, slim-legged, her hair loose about her little head and upon her shoulders, seized at the back of the neck by a big black bow, her eyes dancing with fun, was to see Naiad deserting brooks, fountains, lakes, and wells to haunt forever the two pools of a man's eyes.

To hear her strike a single keynote on the piano and then pour out her unaided voice in a veritable whirl of mounting song made one dream of open country and a climbing lark, but to lie with one's head in her lap, look

up, and see her crouching forward, her brow puckered in a terrible frown, and hear her chant in a hoarse voice the sanguinary words of what she called "The Cockney Lullaby," was to try desperately to hold one's laughter and suddenly burst in the attempt.

John never heard the end of that old, old ballad and never knew its proper name, but as long as he was to live the memory of its first verse as sung by Dora was but another name for laughter hanging on the verge of tears.

"My nime it is Sam 'All, chimbley sweep,
My nime it is Sam 'All, chimbley sweep,
My nime it is Sam 'All;
An' I've robbed both great an' small
An' said to one an' all,
DAMN YOUR EYES! "

Had John been less of a man than he was, had he even been virgin soil to woman, Dora would have held him body and soul and they would have rushed together down the old road to utter satiety and ruin. But he was too broad, too many-sided for such a fate. He lived in fever but not in delirium. Even at the height of their folly his head was clear enough to make his spirit fight for a higher level. There was something within him steadily calling, telling him that no great world is ever bounded by the circle of a woman's arms.

"Dora," he said one morning with sudden decision, "I've got to work."

She stared at him.

"Come over here," he said. "I'm going to fix you and you're going to read. That's a good girl."

He made her comfortable on a couch in a corner of

the room with many pillows at her back and a book in her hands. She pouted her lips at him and he kissed them; then he went to his writing table, laid out all his paraphernalia, an ash tray, pipes, a tobacco pouch, sponge-cup and sponge, a dictionary because he was a miserable speller, matches, a fountain pen, and a beautifully white and alarmingly blank pad of paper. Before this array he sat down, frowned, looked at Dora, and puffed up a vast cloud of smoke to hide her from his sight.

"I wish you would n't smoke a pipe, dear," she said without raising her eyes from her book. "It makes your mustache smell so."

John laid his pipe aside, got out a box of cigarettes, and lit one. Immediately the color rose in Dora's cheeks. "Are n't you forgetting me, dear?" she asked in her hardest voice.

John sprang up, crossed the room, and picked up a cigarette from a pile at her elbow. He held it to her lips and lit it for her. He was trembling with exasperation but he managed to grin down into her face.

He went back to his table and sat down. There was a long silence. He tried to keep his eyes on the blank paper before him but could not. He glanced at Dora. She had hidden her face completely behind her open book, but the book was moving. Slowly, slowly, it descended. The loose waves of Dora's hair appeared, then her smooth, white brow, then her straight dark brows, and then her big black eyes.

The book stopped in its downward course. John stared at those big eyes and they stared back. The

book started again, very slowly. Dora's adorable nose came into view, quivering just the tiniest bit at the nostrils. Then appeared her mouth. Her lips were puckered in a pout. It was the signal for a kiss.

John got up with a laugh. "You little devil," he said. "How did you know I'd be watching?"

He kissed her and went back to his seat. The silence was longer this time, much longer. He was just beginning to concentrate his thoughts on the dire need of concentration in general when a small voice came from the far corner of the room.

"Kiss Dora."

He paid no heed. The voice came again, soft, cooing as any suckling dove, "Kiss Dora."

John coughed and struck a match without looking up. Suddenly Dora sprang to her feet, slammed the book on the floor, stamped her foot, and yelled with a shout that made the welkin ring, "KISS DORA!"

John rose and moved toward her slowly. He gripped her arms suddenly against her sides, tripped and threw her on the couch, kissed her hair, her eyes, her nose, neck, and ears, and then her mouth, until she gasped and choked for breath. Even then he did not stop; he only paused. When at last she struggled free, tore herself away from him, and got to her feet, her lungs were pumping violently and she was as dishevelled as though she had been all but drowned in a raging sea.

"Come on," said John, laughing and panting. "Just a dozen more."

Dora clutched her breast with both hands and laughed back; then calmly, as though she felt the need of a little

exercise, she began to dance. Her vitality was enormous; it was her most constant source of surprise. John sat up and watched her with an admiration that was unflinching.

Her face was as solemn as a mask. She did a rapid and intricate *pas seul*, and then suddenly stopped, erect, poised on one foot. Her hands went up in a Greek gesture parallel with her head. Her free knee crooked, straightened, her leg shot out in a black streak, and she kicked John's writing table upside down.

Then her face broke into the fixed smile of Adelina Genée picking up scattered flowers in "The Dryad." She picked up a cigarette, danced under it, smiled up at it, let it flutter to the floor. She picked up the cracked glass sponge-cup, danced under it, smiled up at it, and let that, too, flutter to the floor. John laughed until his sides ached. Dora reeled toward him and fell into his arms in a magnificent stage faint.

From that hour he abandoned all thought of work while Dora was around and began tricking her into going to bed early. It was easy to do because when people are well they sleep well and Dora, made free of time and the sea and sands, was very well indeed, and a very sleepy little person if one let her alone and kept still for ten minutes at a stretch after dinner.

When he had tucked her in, kissed her good night and sat on the edge of the bed, holding her hand until she had cuddled herself to sleep, John would steal out to his work with no fear of waking her, for during those first hours of the night she slept heavily, like a little child.

Even so, she came to him at times in spirit, laid her

small detaining hand on his shoulder, her warm cheek against his face. At such moments he would stare before him, forgotten the pen in his hand and the blank paper beckoning him to the wider world.

What was the use, after all? Why deceive himself? Dora and he were not one, they were not becoming one. Only with her beside him in spirit as in flesh could he cling to his wider world yet he felt that each day was straining more and more the hold he had upon her. They walked amid the pageantry of love not hand in hand, but each holding the cold hand of the past that stood between them. The past and what else? Doubt and fear. He drew near to a desperate resolve. What were they doing? Burning all the candles of all their days at once. It was not worth it. He would put life on clean plates, seize their past however ugly, drag it into the light of day, link it; weld it to to-day. The blood throbbed in his eardrums. It seemed to him a voice whispering. "Say 'Janice.' Call her Janice."

CHAPTER XLI

IN her haste at leaving New York, Dora had neglected a matter of business. Almost from the day of her arrival at The Lookout letters had been coming, demanding her presence. She had opened the first. One morning John picked up the accumulation of unopened missives and shuffled them absently.

Dora's eyes fastened on his face. "Open them," she commanded.

He did and read them in chronological order. At the crescendo of appeal, remonstrance, insistence, exasperation, and rage that the letters disclosed Dora could not help but laugh and John laughed with her.

"Oh, well," she said at last, "I suppose I'd better go." She rose and started toward her room.

Something in her tone alarmed John. He walked swiftly toward her, seized her arms and turned her around. He was not gentle with her. That was the satisfying thing about Dora. She was so healthy, so strong, that when one touched her one felt that she was supremely virile, unbreakable.

"Promise you'll come back," said John, his eyes glowing and insistent.

For a moment she studied his face intently; then her own softened. "I'll come back," she said gently as she released herself.

John let her go. In the short time that he had known her he had learned one thing: that she was one of those rare women who never look back. She came deliberately to a decision; she held to it steadfastly.

As he saw her off at the station he was conscious of a feeling of elation. He was free, free to work, to live his own life. He looked forward to an orgy of old clothes, pipe tobacco, and inky fingers. But even before he reached The Lookout he felt a depression, a premonition that Dora's spell was still upon him and that the charms at his disposal were too weak to quite break her thrall.

Once back in the house, he changed into his most ragged clothes, laid out his writing things, and lit his most disreputable pipe; but he could not settle down to work. He wandered about restlessly and in desperation picked up the top paper on the pile that had grown and grown through the weeks during which his whole world had been bounded by the circle of a woman's arms.

He stared at the headlines with unbelieving eyes. In those few days of his oblivion the wide world had taken such a precipitous leap as defied immediate comprehension. He felt stunned as though he walked in a dream, as though he waked to find the daily press given over to crude and melodramatic fiction. He picked up one paper after another, scanned the headlines, and plunged deeper in the pile to find the threads to the sudden chaos.

With papers heaped about him he threw himself on the couch and began to read. He had found the greater

charm. Dora was forgotten. Muno-Muno came in with lunch. John glanced up, surprised that hours had passed. He waved the food away.

All day long and far into the night he read and read, steeping himself in the atmosphere of cataclysm that was already becoming an old story to the outside world. He went back to only a month ago when people had been talking of a three weeks' war. He remembered that even then Holson had barred war talk because it bored him; and in that short time war had become more than hell; it had become horror.

At last he had finished reading. He got up, ate his dinner long since gone cold, and went out on the sands. It was a clear, star-spangled night. The first chill of autumn was in the air and a vast stillness. Not a cloud broke the deep bowl of heaven. But standing there hatless beneath the cold, clear stars, John felt himself under a shadow. A cloud hung heavy over his beloved Europe. It darkened the faces of countries he had loved and beneath its creeping shadow still darker blots were spreading in vast bloodstains on the face of the once peaceful earth.

A mocking voice spoke to his memory. "Humanism, a life force and an atmosphere, the only atmosphere which you and I can breathe with any comfort to the soul. . . . The age when we are trying to look at God through man as opposed to the epoch when we looked at man through a far-away God."

John's lips twitched and then straightened to a thought broader than any mockery. The thought was not immediately clear in his mind. It gleamed afar; he

saw it as through a mist. It was at once a guide and a goal. Was this war a mocking eclipse or was it a revelation?

During the two days that followed he lived in a sort of animal suspension. He almost forgot to eat, to dress, to sleep; his body seemed to lose memory of everyday needs and left his mind untrammelled, free to rise and soar on a plane that concentrated below him not only all that he himself had been, felt, or seen but also those worlds of thought, conquered by others, that form the great subconscious growth of each newest generation.

With this newly acquired sight he saw humanism stripped of all vain garnishings, brotherhood not as a sectarian creed but as an idea, a saving force that had slipped into the world of men with the Renaissance and had crept toward dawn through five centuries in the slow birth of things that live long.

He traced the course of light from its rebirth through the channels of individual men and bruised his spirit against the basic truth that all knowledge, all realization, all philosophy, religion itself and its expression, are eternally fractional. Many a man had stood and written at least for a moment in the gleam of that light, but to all who had tried to write *finis* to the rounded chapter had come the round sum of failure. To all but One.

All his desultory reading of modern philosophies suddenly crystallized into a chain of gleaming stones, each distinct, easily compassed. He held them in his hand as though they were a breviary. Here was Hegel, binding himself in a cocoon of the triadic law and abso-

lute idealism, bloodless as is anything ultimate, confessing at the last that his religion had but one defect, that it was made for a single man and that man himself. And here, Spencer, glimpsing day for a moment and groping forever after through innumerable and interminable speculations.

Marx took his turn in the glistening breviary, denying finality as though enlightened by a single divine spark and plunging on thenceforth to a monster contradiction. Last of all came Comte on whose eyes had broken the clearest vision only to be dimmed by the blurred medium through which it passed and besmirched for all time by the dogmatic puerilities of his waking moments. To all of these men had come a glimpse of the warm flame of truth, yet the world had seen each in turn pass, bearing a dead torch. Their level tide of cold reasoning shone here and there with high lights, illumined as through a fog by the single light of a towering Christ.

"Not a finality," said John to himself, "but at least an enduring goal."

He sought the secret of that continuing light and found it. None of the men he had passed in review had bled. With his mind abnormally quickened to the visualization of the dripping agony of the Europe he had known and loved, so long, so well, he saw Christ and the Redemption itself as a mighty illumination, a symbol of this day when ten million common men, blind or conscious, wore a crown of swords and died that men might see. He sat down and as though in a trance wrote the first of his essays on *The New Crucifixion*.

CHAPTER XLII

THE next day John reread what he had written and sat dazed by the reaches of his own subconscious self, by the altitudes to which his fevered brain had swept, and which, in the calm light of a morning so like a thousand other mornings, seemed beyond his normal comprehension. This thing that had been born was no mere copy, no article of barter for food and clothing; it was a message. Either he still dreamed or it would speak to the hearts of men. He sent it to a weekly of wide circulation.

Even inspiration follows a prosaic course through the mill of print to light, but John's paper was not altogether to share the common lot. The reader to whom it was apportioned carried it to the editor's desk and laid it there without a word. The editor read it through at first with impatience and once again patiently, passed it for immediate publication and then sat and stared absently before him. His mind hovered long above trivial personalities, but at last it was dragged down by habit to the level of his daily bread. He rang a bell and waited impatiently, a question hanging on his lips. "Who is John Bogardus?"

In the meantime, reaction had come to John with the force of an overwhelming wave. With his spirit exhausted and dormant, his heart suddenly reawakened. Its pulse clamored in his ears as though it had been

knocking at a closed door through long hours. "Awake! What are you doing? What have you lost?"

In John's eyes swam a memory of Dora, dim and distant, looking back from a far horizon. The three days of her absence lengthened suddenly into weeks, into years. It seemed to him as though with another moment's delay she would be gone beyond recall. He rushed to telephone a wire to her. Every hour he followed up his first appeal with another. At last came her answer: "For heaven's sake stop wiring, boy. I'm coming."

It made him smile, that message; it was so like her.

She came. They met silently, almost shyly, but through all the long drive to The Lookout John could feel her nearness warming him, gradually possessing him, so that when, once in the house, she hurled off her formal traveling things and started dancing around the room, he clutched her in his arms and held her so tightly that she cried out.

That evening and half the next day were like a taste of Paradise unalloyed, but with the afternoon reason spoke to John. It told him to beware. It reminded him of the world of the spirit. It even went so far as to picture to him Dora throttling the world of the spirit with her soft hands, and smiling. He grew depressed. How could he make her concentrated eyes look beyond the close circle they had drawn about themselves?

"What's the matter with you?" she asked suddenly. "Just now I made a joke, a good joke, and you didn't laugh."

"Do you really want me to tell you?" asked John.

"Um-hm," said Dora, her mouth full of two chocolates at once, "ba-ki-mi-firt."

He took her in his arms and kissed her, then he held her close and talked to her. "You see, kiddie," he said. "It's this way. I've simply got to work. We've had our honeymoon; now let's settle down like old married folks. I know there is n't much for you to do, but if you'd just go for a walk in the morning for an hour, or read or sew. I can do a lot in an hour a day."

"But why do you want to work, dear?" said Dora, quite calmly. "Are you sure it is n't because you are getting just a *little* bit tired of having Dora around?"

John knew he was on dangerous ground but this time he thought he saw a clear way out. "Tired of you, darling?" he said. "It's just because I'm not tired of you that I've got to work. We two are pretty healthy youngsters. We eat a lot and we've got rent to pay even if it is an infinitesimal sum just big enough to cover love and two in a cottage."

Immediately he felt demeaned. In a way what he said was true but in another it was a monstrous lie. Fearing to put her to the test of his world of the spirit he had crawled to this low level that she might understand.

"Oh," said Dora, in a tone of faint distaste he had never heard before, "you mean money."

She disengaged herself and got up. He wondered what had come over her, she was so cool, distant, and different from her usual self. He had forgotten that a woman of her precedents despises all but the uses of

money. Spend, spend till the last cent is gone and if she loves she'll go on the streets for a lover. But save, live within an income, any income — Dora turned from him and passed into her room. "I'll be back in a minute," she said.

She came back, carrying a work basket in her hands. Her face was set in hard lines. She looked as ageless and as cold as a statue. John stared at her and was silent. He jeered at himself for ever having had a thought of calling her Janice, laughed at himself for an emotional fool.

Dora set the basket on the table and opened it. "Come here," she said.

The basket was large and held a tangled mass of things so various that John could not help but smile. Dora smiled with him but apathetically. She drew out one thing after another; a pair of gloves split at the finger tips, an old bedraggled and beloved powder puff, a lone silk stocking, a bit of smudged fancy work that looked as if it had been started in her infancy, cotton, yarn, a skein of silk, but above all, banknotes: English banknotes and American yellow-backs, and finally a generous handful of gold coins.

She pushed the heap of money towards John. "There you are," she said. "Now, for God's sake, cheer up!"

In a flash he realized what was happening and the thing that had changed her. She was reproving him, reproving him for measuring the cost of her in money.

"Dora," he said, "I've never felt like slapping you



DORA

before but I feel like it now. Take that money back and do it quick."

Dora gave him a sly glance like a puppy wondering how far he dare go with the full-grown family cat. In that instant her whole atmosphere changed. She was no longer a statue; she was alive and in a mood to tease. Keeping her voice to the same hard tone, she said, "Oh, no, I won't. You need n't mind taking it. Just look at it as board and lodging."

Pale and trembling, John rose to his feet. Dora, watching him, gave an excited gasp and started to laugh. John controlled himself with an effort and reached across the table for the work-basket. Dora snatched at it. Between them it turned over and two or three spools of cotton tumbled out, the loose thread of one dragging with it a ring. Dora's eyes fastened on the ring; she went white and reached out her hand slowly as though to cover it.

The ring rolled to the middle of the table, fell on its side, and suddenly possessed the room. From a setting of pale platinum shone a circle of seed-pearls surrounding the red glow of a ruby whose equal John had never seen except through the plate glass of a shop window. The magnificence of the ring arrested his eye; the glowing stone set fire to his mind and sent it reeling from one horrible thought to another.

He no longer saw the ring. A vision came to him of Dora, his own Dora, flaming years behind his reach in the untarnished glory of her innocence, bartering the torch of life for a vile precious stone. Jealousy and remorse, pity, love, and despair swelled up from his

heart in one confused and strangling surge. He caught at his collar as if it were choking him; then his blood-shot eyes fell once more on the ring. He picked it up and hurled it into the fireplace. It struck on the grate and rebounded. Two or three seed-pearls splashed into the air like drops of water from a fountain. Dora sprang up and rushed across the room.

"My ring," she cried. "Oh, my ring!"

Even as she crouched to pick it up he was upon her. His hands clutched down at her and fell in her soft hair. He seized it and dragged her to her feet. Breathing hard, holding her to him roughly, he sought her wrists and found them, gripped them till the bones cracked. "Give it to me," he gasped.

Dora raised her eyes, luminous and unafraid, to his face. "John," she said, "I haven't got it. Look, dear. It's on the floor."

He glanced down, saw the ring, and crushed it with his foot. The metal and the pearls crumbled and fell away but the ruby remained. It glowed up from the darkness of the floor balefully like a red eye and said to him, "I am still here. You cannot crush me."

Suddenly a wave of shame swept him from head to foot, shame for the raging thing he had become. He dropped Dora's wrists, released her, and raised his hands to his face. His cheeks were hot and wet with sweat, his brow was cold and clammy to the touch of his fevered hands. Then his arms fell limp to his sides, his head dropped forward, and he made such a sound in his throat as no woman ever heard twice.

In that moment Dora knew herself desperately beloved. She sank to the floor, wrapped her arms around his knees, buried her face against him, and sobbed as though only then her heart had broken. It was the end.

CHAPTER XLIII

ALL that night John paced up and down the beach, and till the sky began to pale in the east a light gleamed from Dora's room. He did not have to ask what she was doing; he knew as surely as though no walls intervened. She was packing, and crying. A thousand times he asked himself if he could let her go and a thousand times came the answer, "She is gone." Nothing that he could do could hold her; in spirit and in flesh they two waged a battle that rushed on to its own appointed end.

Through the long night he lived over moment by moment their life together. Even at that short range he could see how it had mounted by steady leaps like a mortal fever to a predestined and consuming death. In his despair it seemed to him that naught was left, that in the hot flame of jealousy, violence, and scorching, demeaning thoughts, all hopes of peace to body or to soul had perished.

Toward morning a rage seized him. He stripped, hurled himself into the sea, and battled with the waves until through very exhaustion they laid a chill upon his flesh and subdued his brain to a cold stupor. He went to the breakfast table outwardly calm but inwardly in a state of tension which he little realized. A new thought obsessed him. He had lost all, but he could still lose more. He could settle for all time his silly doubts and

fears. To-day, this morning, he would say to Dora, "Janice!" and see if the heavens could still fall! He clung to the thought of this last folly like a gambler to a last small coin.

Dora came to the table looking pale and tired but coldly self-possessed. She was dressed in a close-fitting traveling suit that in contrast to her short-skirted, holiday garb made her seem tall, slim, and suddenly matured. She had gone back into herself as John first had known her.

They sat down opposite each other. Gleaming on the white cloth where Muno-Muno had carefully placed it was a little pile of pearls, metal, and the ruby, looking like a tiny heap of fairy rubbish. John reached for an envelope, swept the ruin into it and laid it aside. He knew instinctively that he need not say in words, "I will have this ring reset and send it to you." He and Dora had passed into the intimacy that scorns speech for little things.

They toyed with their food but scarcely ate. They were both silent as though they knew that the air was charged and might flash into a blinding flare at the spark of a careless word. Dora moved her hands nervously, to her head, to the table, to her lap. More than once she caught up her tiny watch, hanging, like an iridescent bead, at the end of a long old-gold necklace, and looked at it. Every time she glanced at her watch John raised his eyes to the clock on the mantel.

"It is time," she said at last, laid down her napkin and pushed back her chair.

John's eyes fastened on her face. He clutched the

edge of the table with both hands. He could feel small drops of cold sweat forming on his forehead. "Janice!" he whispered hoarsely. The sound he made was more like a croak than a name.

"What?" asked Dora, her eyes wide and puzzled.

"Janice!" shouted John and struck the table with his fist.

Dora's pallor went dead white. Her chin flew up as though some one had stabbed her in the heart. She swayed from side to side and clutched the table. "Why? Oh, why?" she moaned, her hands clasped and straining so that the knuckles showed white as the linen cloth. Then suddenly, her eyes that had half closed, blazed out on him.

"You could n't let me go without hurting me with another woman's name?" she asked, steadying her gaze and bringing it defiantly to his face. Her lip began to curl. She raised one hand to her heaving breast but drew it away with sudden decision, tapped the table, and stared fixedly before her. "Or are you just mad?"

"Mad!" cried John, staring at her despairingly, and choked on the word. Oh, this was worse, a thousand times worse. He had staked all — and lost! By no such crude assault could Janice be snatched from the long years that had made and bound her. He rose and fell on his knees beside her, buried his face in her lap and sobbed.

She ran her fingers through his hair once, then she pushed his head from her lap, got up, and left him clinging to the empty chair. When he recovered himself and arose, her face was calm with the calm of a trained con-

trol. She had picked up a cigarette and was looking around for a match.

During the drive to the station they scarcely spoke and when they did it was of commonplace things. She was to go to a certain hotel and to cross by the boat of her choice. She need do nothing nor worry. He would arrange everything by wire. Even at the station they said no good-by. John helped her up the steps, watched her disappear into the coach, and half turned to go. But something stopped him. A definite influence seemed to hold him.

The train with its blank windows or blanker faces started and crawled by him. He looked up. She had rushed through the carriage to the rear platform. She stood there, a little breathless, holding both hands to her breast in a gesture he knew well. Her eyes met his. He saw, or he imagined, that her eyes and her whole face were changed. It was as if she had transcended youth, as if the youth that was left to her had suddenly become fixed for all time, staple as the youth of the soul that cannot die. Gravity, sweetness, and love hovered in her gaze as though not yet quite sure of their abiding place and as she leaned toward him, all passion forgotten, her lips moved mutely. She made no sound but to John it seemed that he heard her cry, "Suffer. Pay. You and I will still grow beyond this thing!"

He made his slow way back to The Lookout. All that day he was plunged in thought, buffeted between the seeming and the truth of Dora, oppressed and disheartened by an all-pervading desolation. He locked her room without looking in and put away the key. In

the days that followed he tried to lock Dora herself away in some deep and dark closet of the mind.

Gradually a sense of freedom came back to him, a freedom that was sweet even though the chains that had bound him had been of flowers heavy only in perfume. He reveled in his pipe, in lonely, tobacco-laden musings, in ragged clothes, early hours, and all those things upon which the constant presence of Dora, passionately demanding and demanded, had put a tacit ban, and he looked forward to quiet hours of work.

But freedom too can pall when once the heart has known servitude, and days came, nights came, when John and the memory of Dora walked hand in hand on the sands, sat upon the couch locked in each other's arms, pressed lips to lips and breast to breast; nights when echoes of laughter and a fragrance of womankind that would not die haunted the lonely house.

Was marriage, after all, merely a habit, a habit of the heart? He picked up a small lamp, took the key, and went for the first time to the room that had been Dora's. He set down the lamp and looked about him.

On the dresser were wilted roses in a dried up vase. A discarded pair of slippers, only half worn out, one tumbled on its side, lay on the floor. On a chair hung a black hair-ribbon, broad and smooth in places, tightly wrinkled in spots. Would Dora, his child-Dora, ever again wear her hair down her back? For whom? His teeth ground together on that torturing thought. Pain settled in his eyes. They passed on and paused at the washstand where two cakes of soap lay in the dish in strange misalliance.

He had learned that, too — that a woman must have common washing soap for her hair. He picked up the vulgar cake and stared at it vaguely. How common it was but what memories it evoked of Dora's glorious hair all fluffy and soft and fragrant! How he had loved her hair on those days when she had said with all the women in the world, "I've just washed it and I simply can't do anything with it!"

He went out to the living-room with a smile on his lips and a dull ache in his heart, picked out all the little things that spoke too loudly of Dora, gathered them together, and carried them into her room. He stood as one dazed, held in the clutch of memory. Just*so had his heart ached on a blue day of long ago, the day of the farewell to Janice. A lump rose in his throat. Had he blundered on that far-away day? Had he killed the thing he loved best?

For answer Dora's face as she leaned from the train pressed to his eyes. The gravity, sweetness and love that he had seen hovering in her gaze enveloped him like a mantle, blinded his eyes as with a vision. He saw her lips move. He heard her voice. "Suffer. Pay. You and I — You and I —"

CHAPTER XLIV

DORA was gone and summer was over. Even the warm South Jersey coast was approaching the grip of frost. John looked out to bleak skies and a dull sea and knew that soon his desolation would be more desolate, but he had no fears for to him all places, all time, had become but here and to-day.

One morning he awoke to the chill air that tells of bursting chestnut burs, of the falling of the glory of painted leaves, and bears with it the first whisper of snow and a threat of ice and sleet. He arose shivering and stepped out to a gray and sodden world. It was raining; a fine, persistent rain, slanting like a falling mist to the driving north-east wind.

John got out Muno-Muno's hated woolens and handed them to him. The black's eyes started wide as to a sudden fear and filled to the brim with a strange fire. They were like two wells of light. He took the woolens, stared at them, shook his head, and laid them aside. Through the three days that the rain lasted he crouched chattering over the kitchen fire clothed only in his loin cloth.

At last the storm broke to a limpid day, still and blue, so clear that the eye reached maddeningly beyond the range of sight, aspiring to infinity. A rare calm had fallen on the sea. To the clear line of the horizon, so

near that it called to vision to peep beyond now or never, the ocean swelled like an undulating mirror of the bowl of heaven, mute, silent but for the gentle whispering of its hushed lips upon the beach.

In mid-afternoon John looked out and saw Muno-Muno sitting on his favorite sand-dune, gazing out and beyond the sea as he had so often gazed before; only, to-day he was different, rigid, chin up, intent. John watched him absently but curiously. Presently the black got up, walked down to the edge of the water and with a slow gesture let fall his loin-cloth. The sun glinted on his naked body and blazoned it against earth and sea and sky as though the whole world held but this single sculptured bronze.

With his hands fallen at his sides Muno-Muno stepped over the thin line of foam and walked into the water. The vast mirror of the sea gathered and spread in oily ripples from his ankles, from his knees, from his waist, and crept steadily higher. John knew that like most natives brought up on the shores of waters infested by sharks or crocodiles Muno-Muno could not swim. Feeling vaguely uneasy he went out on the veranda and shouted.

Muno-Muno did not turn. With his eyes steadfastly fixed on the beckoning horizon he walked on and down. The water rose to his shoulders, covered them, reached his chin. John leaped from the veranda and plunged in great frantic strides down toward the beach. While his eyes had been vacantly questioning the black's strange actions, Muno-Muno's immutable purpose had crashed in on his consciousness and revealed itself to his

inner sight. He reached the beach panting, dismay clutching at his heart.

"Muno-Muno!" he shouted hoarsely.

There was no answer. Where but now as he ran he had glimpsed a black dot centering a widening circle of oily ripples there was nothing, nothing but the vast undulation of an unbroken sea.

John rushed into the water. It seized and wrapped his trousers clammily about his legs, arrested him, made him pause. Never before had the sea seemed so vast, so uncharted. Where had those ripples quivered only a moment ago? He waited to see some sign of commotion, some rising blur upon the surface of the water. It did not come. With despair already in his heart he plunged headlong, swam out and dived, swam up and down and dived again and again. Quickly exhausted by his clinging clothes in moments that seemed like hours, he turned and forged his slow way to shore.

On the beach stood a stranger. He had topped the big dune behind the house just as Muno-Muno had sunk from sight. He had rushed down to help but age had quickly laid its forbidding hand upon him. He was still breathing heavily with a cracked wheeze in his throat. John stared at him with unrecognizing eyes.

"You don't know me," said the old man. "But do not let us stop here," he continued without a pause. "Come up to the house. Change your things."

John's emotion was conquered, almost stilled, by the calmness of this stranger in the face of death. Struggling to place and grasp a half-formed recollection, he followed the old man toward the house and left him

submissively to go and change to dry clothes. As he dressed, absently picking up one garment after another, full memory came suddenly upon him. It was the Dean sitting out there, scarcely more aged after all than when he last had seen him.

John came out fully dressed and sat down before his guest. The Dean was folding and unfolding in his hands a crumpled magazine. He opened it and laid it on the table. John saw the heading of his essay.

The Dean slowly turned one leaf backward and forward, glanced at a phrase or two with a gravity tinged by a feeling John had never seen him betray in the old days, and finally turned his eyes on John's face. "I came to tell you," he said in his low sonorous tones, "that you have swum back into my heart and into the heart of the university. After all my years I think of the two almost as one. We need you. We have just founded a social chair and I have been holding it in my unsteady old hands waiting for the right man to come along — waiting for you."

John threw up his head in instinctive protest and then suddenly dropped it. A strange lassitude fell upon him. To what freedom did he cling to-day? Where was freedom to-day if not in service?

"Never mind what you bring in your hands," continued the Dean. "Bring yourself. Name the chair what you like. Write your essays just as you would here, only lecture them first." He laid his hand on John's arm. "Will you come?"

John looked at the old man's face, suddenly alight

with the intensity of a great desire, and then let his gaze wander about the room and out across the still sea.

"When?" he asked.

A wave of color rose in the Dean's sallow cheeks. "Now," he said. "I came down by motor. The car is waiting for us."

John rose and turned slowly about, drinking in with his eyes each least detail of the little house whose desolation had suddenly become absolute. He picked up an overcoat, motioned to the Dean to go out, closed the windows, locked the doors and then led the way over the hill along the single strand of wire that linked The Lookout to the world.

"Is n't there anything you want to bring?" asked the Dean, troubled.

"Nothing," said John.

Plunged in silence, his mind dazed and wandering in a mist of memories, he sat huddled in his corner throughout the long ride, and, when after dark they reached the door of his father's house, scarcely answered the strong pressure of the hand the Dean held out in a wordless farewell.

He did not enter the house at once. For a moment he stood on its steps and looked toward the distant campus. Lights gleamed there like stars in a still sky and above them rose misty forms of granite and brick and the Gothic cobweb of leafless elms all equally softened and aged by the dimming touch of night. It was a dear place, a quiet place where roads end, but only in service.

He felt as though he stood on the threshold of a

mighty portal. He forgot the Dean's long handclasp. If his own hand was warm, it was warm because Dora seemed to hold it. He could not tell if she held him back or led him on; he only knew that she was eternally with him as he last had seen her, her throbbing heart naked to his eyes.

"Marriage," he breathed, "is a monumental nothing. It's the garlands that count, the garlands of constancy, faith, purification, that we bring with us to its immemorial altar."

He turned and passed into the old familiar hallway, hung up his coat and hat, knocked on the library door, opened it at a call from his father, and went in. The professor did not rise to greet him. He was sitting in a deep chair drawn close before the open fire and in his lap were scattered the loose sheets of a bulky manuscript. He was dropping the pages one by one into the flames. He twisted in his seat as his son drew near.

"Ah, John," he said, his face lighting up. "You have come back! I am very glad."

He held out his hand. John grasped it and looked down at his father. The professor had grown white and old, even his brilliant eyes were blurred as though they had been dimmed by years of tears. All about him, on the floor, on the table and the chairs, lay open newspapers, the accumulation of days and weeks. Just their headlines were an epitome of all the horrors that a nation gone mad, building a philosophy on iron and bowing in adulation before a God of steel, had visited upon a blind and pitiful world, slow to believe the incredible, stunned before the monstrous. Before that

onslaught phrases old and beloved,—honor, mercy, charity, and faith,—clung desperately to the written page as though each day threatened to blot them forever from the minds of men.

“What are you doing, Father?” asked John.

The professor let his hands drop on the crumpled sheets in his lap and stared into the fire. “I am burning my monograph,” he said quietly, “my monograph on the great American Game. I read your essay. Like you, my boy, I know that to-day all frivolous ambitions are dead.”

With the opening of the following week, John found himself once more before a class. As he looked back in memory it seemed to him that these faces were changed, matured, possessed of a gravity beyond their years. He did not know that he gazed upon the reflection of his own countenance.

“Gentlemen,” he began, “I am an apostle.”

THE END



